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Goose with the Golden Eggs

Brother Bill and Me

M^{rs} White

Charming Pair

Turn Him Out

An Odd Lot

Went to the Wife

Mudborough Gleason

Doing My Uncle

Meg's Diversion

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Goose with the Golden Eggs

Brother Bill and Me

Mrs White

Charming Pair

Turn Spin Put

An Odd Lot

War to the Knife

Mudborough Gleeion

Doing My Uncle

Meg's Diversion

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

H. G. B.

1

—

THE
GOOSE WITH THE GOLDEN EGGS

A Farce

IN

ONE ACT,

BY MESSRS.

AUGUSTUS MAYHEW

AND

SUTHERLAND EDWARDS

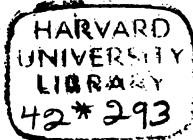
AUTHORS OF

Christmas Boxes, &c. &c.

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GOOSE WITH THE GOLDEN EGGS.

*First performed at the Strand Theatre,
(Under the Management of Miss Swanborough)
On Monday, September 1st, 1859.*

CHARACTERS.

TURBY, <i>a Country Lawyer</i>	Mr. JAMES ROGERS.
FLICKSTER, <i>a Country Lawyer</i>	Mr. CLARKE.
BONSER, <i>Clerk to Turby</i>	Mr. MOWBRAY
1st MAN	Mr. EDGE.
2nd MAN	Mr. CHATER.
MRS. TURBY	Mrs. CHARLES MELVILLE
CLARA, <i>her Daughter</i>	Miss IDA WILTON.
MAID	Miss TURTLE.

Villagers, &c.

TIME—The present day

COSTUMES.

MR. TURBY.—An eccentric suit of black.
MR. FLICKSTER.—Blue coat, light trousers, and waistcoat.
MR. BOUSER.—A walking suit.
1st MAN.—Shooting coat, gaiters, &c.
2nd MAN.—Smock frock, corduroy trousers, &c.
MRS. TURBY.—Modern silk dress, and cap.
CLARA.—Muslin morning dress.
MAID.—Cotton dress, apron, cap.

THE
Old Times House
GOOSE WITH THE GOLDEN EGGS.



SCENE.—*A Room in Turby's House. Against the wall are deed boxes, and a library, R.—centre door—doors R. and L.—on the L. of C. D. a high lawyer's desk, with deeds and papers, pens, ink, &c.—on R. a round table, with deeds, papers, pens, ink, &c.*

BONSER *discovered at desk, writing.*

BONSER. (*throwing down pen*) I shall never have finished this confounded bill of costs! Ugh! I hate this lawyer's business! To think that all this cheating should only bring in a pound a week! It's impossible to gain even a dishonest living in this office! (*reading*) "To attending plaintiff at his own house, and discussing the matter with him, engaged four hours." (*speaking*) That's the day the governor dined with his client! (*reading*) "To attending plaintiff the next morning, when I assured him I agreed in all I had said over night." (*speaking*) Old Turby had forgotten his umbrella, and went back to fetch it! (*reading*) "To advising plaintiff to go to law, and convincing him that defendant was in the wrong, engaged two days." (*speaking*) That's the most insulting charge of all; especially as the defendant has won. If I stop much longer at this work, I shall be ashamed to look a policeman in the face! If it were not for that dear girl, Clara, I would be off to-morrow. If ever there was an angel—(*running to desk*) I hear some one coming! (*begins to write violently—suddenly throwing down pen*) Why this fear? I know that footstep—it is she!

CLARA *puts her head in at door, R.*

CLARA. Is he here—dear?

BONSER. (*whispering*) No, my love! he's gone to write a

writ upon Captain Jones—I saw him running down the lane after that gallant officer.

CLARA. (*whispering*) Then he'll be away some time?

BONSER. (*whispering*) Yes, my angel—the captain is long-winded, and runs like a young stag.

CLARA. (*entering, and shutting the door*) If he comes, I'll say I wanted one of the books out of the library. How it pains me to be obliged to resort to these excuses! heigho!

BONSER. (*L. c.*) It is disgusting—frightful! But what are we to do? You see, I would get a week's salary in advance, and entreat you to elope, only I know he would bring an action for abduction.

CLARA. But you forget, dearest—I was twenty-one, four days ago!

BONSER. Poor girl! then you are now answerable for your own debts?

CLARA. But I am also answerable for my own conduct—for now I may marry whom I please—so it is no good papa's bothering me about Mr. Flickster, I'll have nothing to say to him!

BONSER. That's right—do not even speak to him, or he's sure to commence an action for breach of promise.

CLARA. But what are your plans? What are our future prospects?

BONSER. Alas, my love, I know not. If I were to marry you, and Turby found it out, he would discharge me, and then what should we do? You see this village is so uncivilized, that it does not contain a single loan office.

CLARA. Yet he would not allow his own child to starve.

BONSER. We must not be too venturesome. It would be a dangerous experiment for us to try!

(*TURBY coughs outside, L.*)

CLARA. (*alarmed*) Hush! my father has come back—I can hear him panting in the passage. Quick, give me a book. (*he gives her one*) Now to your place. (*CLARA sits L. of R. table, reading*)

BONSER. (*jumps on his seat at desk—writing*) Mind and speak as if you weren't nervous.

Enter TURBY, C. D. from L., out of breath.

TURBY. I never saw a man go at such a rate as that Captain Jones! there was no serving him! They may well say he went the pace. No wonder he outran the constable! (*suddenly sees CLARA*) What are you doing here, miss?

CLARA. I just stepped in to get a book from the library.

TURBY. (C.) Now, once for all, mind, I won't have you reading books—I'll lock up the book-case.

CLARA. (R.) Not read the books?

TURBY. No—you dogsear them, and cut the leaves—I never read them myself. What book have you taken?

CLARA. The most interesting one I could find—it is called—
(hesitating, and trying to conceal it.

TURBY. Give it here. (takes it) "Petersdorff on Special Remainders." Ah, it's a very nice, interesting work! and if it wasn't mine, I'd lend it to you. But women have nothing to do with the laws of their country! There, you can go—you've made me lose five minutes, and I might have issued an execution in that time!

Exit CLARA, R. D.—BONSER lays down his pen.
Why ain't you working, sir? Do you think I've retired from business?

BONSER. (L.) I was going to dinner, sir.

TURBY. (R.) Dinner! hang me if you're not always wasting your time!

BONSER. Why, sir, I haven't been away from the desk for more than five minutes all the morning.

TURBY. Then I've a great mind to deduct that five minutes from your salary. (goes to table, R.) Go and sign judgment against the butcher opposite. (gives paper) I saw him drinking with the baker as I came along—and I'm afraid they'll arrange matters amicably. And when you go out, tell the barmaid at the Nag's Head that I want to see her—she shall serve Captain Jones—he'd never be such a villain as to suspect a girl of seventeen!

BONSER. I will, sir, as I come back from dinner.

TURBY. Dinner! What, are you going to dinner again?

BONSER. I was going, sir, as you came in.

TURBY. Stuff and nonsense! you could have dined twice over whilst you've been talking about it. (looking at watch) It's too late now—take two or three shrimps with your tea.

BONSER. Two or three shrimps with my tea! I wish to dine, sir! I am accustomed to have my five meals a day, sir.

TURBY. (R.) Then you'll not suit me very long. Do you fancy I give you a pound a week merely to eat five meals a day? I can get plenty of clerks to do it cheaper!

BONSER. I must eat, sir!

TURBY. The cant of the day. Do you know what eating leads to? Why, drinking.

BONSER. (L.) But I don't drink, sir.

TURBY. You do!

BONSER. No, sir!

TURBY. How dare you tell me such a falsehood, when I saw you at the pump the other day.

BONSER. But there's no brandy there, sir!

TURBY. That's not your fault! you'd drink it all the same if there were.

BONSER. You appear to wish to pick a quarrel with me, sir.

TURBY. That's slander! that's slander! I don't want to quarrel, you scoundrel—I won't quarrel! Get out of the house—leave the house—I discharge you. Go, and starve!

BONSER. As you please, sir.

TURBY. A scoundrel! I believe you only came here to make love to my daughter.

BONSER. Since you mention it, sir, that *was* my only motive.

TURBY. (*crossing to L., and taking up Bonser's hat*) Ah, here's a villain! (*crossing back to R.*) attempting to carry off a gentleman's daughter, when he can't afford to pay even forty shillings damages. Oh, you precious villain! There's the door—be off with you! (*goes to C. D.—opens it*)

BONSER. (*L.*) Let me take my hat, sir. I suppose I may take my hat, unless you want to steal it. (*TURBY throws hat at him*) I'll call round for the salary that is due to me. (*going*)

TURBY. (*aside*) That reminds me I never took any receipts from him, and he might recover two or three weeks from me. If he goes to Smith's office over the way, I'm lost! I shouldn't mind taking such a case myself. (*to BONSER*) You ask for money as if you had a bill to take on Friday! You can call again.

BONSER. I shall not forget it. *Exit, C. D. to L.*

TURBY. If you do, I shan't be offended. Upon my word, I do really believe that if I could only get a young partner, who would put five hundred pounds into the business, and do all the work, I'd never, as long as I live, take a clerk again!

Enter MRS. TURBY at door, R. 2 E.

MRS. T. What on earth is all this noise about, Mr. Turby?

TURBY. (*seated L. of R. table*) That villain, Bonser, has dared to answer me.

MRS. T. What do you mean?

TURBY. Why, I simply said he was a scoundrel, and he had the impudence to contradict me.

MRS. T. What then?

TURBY. What then! Why, of course, I turned him into the street.

MRS. T. Of course, you know your own business best, Mr. Turby—but my opinion is, that you will never get such a good clerk again. I am sure he was most attentive to me—used to

go out shopping with me—and never once objected to carry a brown paper parcel!

TURBY. That's just his cunning! It was done to deceive you. I tell you he was making love to Clara all the time!

MRS. T. May be, my dear—but I never saw anything wrong in his conduct.

TURBY. Nothing wrong! (*striking the table with his fist in a passion*)

MRS. T. (*starting*) Dear me, Mr. Turby!

TURBY. Nothing wrong! Don't tell me, madam! when, with my own eyes, I've seen him endeavour to tempt the girl from the path of duty with a whole ~~stock~~ of Spanish liquorice!

(*rising, and going down L. C.*)

MRS. T. (R.) You know she had a cold, my dear. And what to goodness will you do until you get another clerk?

TURBY. I shall take Mr. Flickster in as a partner, and let him marry Clara—he has five hundred pounds, and is a very clever fellow—he won a goose of me in a bet the other day—and the way in which he cheated me in the transaction, proves he'd be an ornament to the profession.

MRS. T. Stuff, Mr. Turby, stuff! Now what do you want with a partner?—if it is for the sake of the five hundred pounds, you had much better write to your rich sister, and borrow that amount.

TURBY. Hem! that's not a bad idea, my love! my memory is going, or else I should have remembered that the poor afflicted girl is crazy. Leave me to my thoughts, my poppet.

Exit Mrs. TURBY, D. R. 2 E.

Really I am half sorry Bonser has gone! he was a decent fellow, and not dear; but then his appetite was too large, and he was far too particular about professional trifles. The fact is, I want a sharp fellow like Flickster—he has great talent—great talent—would arrest his own father in the way of business.

Enter MARY C. D. from L.

MARY. (L.) A parcel, sir—a shilling to pay.

TURBY. (*sitting at table, R.*) Don't take it in—don't take it in. I shouldn't wonder if my rival, Smith, has sent a hamper of stones in revenge for my having won that case from him.

MARY. It comes by railway, sir! man's in a hurry.

TURBY. Oh, very well, then, pay it. (*rising, feeling in his pocket*) Confound the thing, where did I put that bad shilling to? *perhaps as the man's in a hurry he might take it. Bless*

my soul, I shall forget my own name next. Why, of course, I gave it at the Charity sermon on Sunday. (*gives MARY a shilling*) Here's the money.

Exit MARY, C. to L.

I don't half like the idea of that hamper—it can't be any client who is grateful. However, if it be a stone, I shall know at whose door to lay it.

Enter MRS. TURBY and CLARA, R. D., as MARY comes on, C. D. from L., with hamper, putting it down C.

MRS. T. (R. C.) A present from London, my dear—a present from London. Didn't I see it in the candle last night, when you called me an old fool?

TURBY. (L. C.) Come, make haste—are you going to be all day unpacking?

CLARA. (R.) Who can have sent sent it? I'd give anything to know. Perhaps it its wine!

MRS. T. (R. C.) Wine! how on earth has wine got into your head? Bless the girl, she'll be all day fiddling with the basket. (*helping to unpack*)

TURBY. Stop, I can see a feather. (*sits on basket*) They never could have had the cunning to cover the stone. (*getting up*) Pull out the straw.

CLARA. It's sherry, I think!

MRS. T. Port, I hope!

TURBY. (*taking out a goose by the neck, an address card to the leg*) A goose, by Jove!

MRS. T. What a beauty! addressed to Clara from her aunt.

TURBY. What—what? addressed to Clara! no matter, I always carve, (*a pause—sniffing as if he smelt something—looks at MRS. TURBY, who in her turn sniffs and puts her handkerchief to her nose—CLARA does the same—MARY uses her apron—TURBY holds his nose*) Mrs. Turby, do you detect a very powerful odour?

MARY. (*holding her nose, C.*) It smells like a partridge.

CLARA. (*after looking at address*) Oh, lud! I declare it's shameful. It's been a week coming.

MRS. T. Nonsense—nonsense! (*smells and shudders*) What a pity it is not venison! it would be delicious!

TURBY. (*smelling it*) Ugh—ugh! what a fool my sister must be—she knew it was coming by railway, why didn't she embalm it? we don't want any fishing bait.

MRS. T. Ugh! a dog wouldn't touch it. I think we had better give it to some deserving pauper.

TURBY. Nonsense! hang me if you wouldn't give everything

away if I'd let you. How do you know, as Clara is of age, but that the servants would like to eat it for a treat?

Hands it to MARY, who turns away in disgust, and exits indignantly, C. D. to L.

There's daintiness! really what's come to servants, I don't know. *(knocking is heard outside, L.—CLARA helps to put basket L., near the desk—TURBY wraps goose up in his pocket handkerchief)* Come in!

FLICKSTER appears at C. D. from L.

Oh, here's Flickster—what does he want.

FLICK. *(down c.)* Good day to you, ladies! *(MRS. TURBY, R.)* Will you, Miss Turby, *(to CLARA, L. C.)* allow me to offer you one of the most wonderful curiosities of modern invention. *(presents knife)*

TURBY. *(R.)* What a beautiful knife. *(whisper CLARA)* Did Bonser ever give you anything like that.

FLICK. They are very scarce, and it was with great difficulty that I procured this one. It contains fourteen blades—a corkscrew, and an instrument for taking stones out of horses' shoes. *(affectionately)* But you must buy it of me, or it may cut our loves.

CLARA. *(L. C.)* I cannot, for I have nothing less than half-a-crown, Mr. Flickster. *(shows money—TURBY pulls her sleeves)*

FLICK. *(R. C., taking the money)* Pray make no excuses, that will do. *(aside)* I only paid two shillings for it at an omnibus window.

CLARA. *(taking the knife and crossing to R.)* Mr. Flickster shows his taste by offering such a present to a lady. Good morning. *Exit R.*

MRS. TURBY makes a formal curtsy, following her.

TURBY. *(aside)* By Jove, that's a capital thought of mine. I owe Fickster a goose for the last bet he won. I'll give him Clara's! ah, never throw anything away—it's sure to turn in useful some day. Flickster, my boy, *(aloud)* I want to get out of debt with you. You won a bet of a goose from me. I've got a beauty for you here. *(holding the goose in his right hand, and turning his head away)*

FLICK. *(R.)* Thank you, Turby, I always said you were a gentleman. Now mind, you must come and dine with me when I have it cooked—I insist upon it.

TURBY. Thank you—it's very kind of you, but I am sure to be engaged on that day. Here's your goose. *(gives it to FLICKSTER)*

FLICK. (takes goose—a pause—FLICKSTER makes a face—

turning up his nose two or three times—TURBY laughing aside) I say, what's this? none of this, Turby! who do you think is going to eat a goose that died months ago? I should have to stew it in chloride of lime, and serve it up with disinfecting fluid.

TURBY. I can't help it—that's your look out. You've *won* your goose, and you've *got* your goose. What more do you expect?

FLICK. It won't do, Turby—I'm not going to take a bad goose. *(gives it back)*

TURBY. Now I appeal to you. Did we say what sort of a goose it was to be? Besides, don't you talk about generosity? what did you give Clara that Jew's penknife for?

FLICK. Oh, ah! I know what you're after. You'd like a fellow to go spending half a sovereign in giving her presents, when perhaps, she won't have me at all. When we are married it'll be different.

TURBY. Dear, dear! the meanness of the world—because, of course, then all her property will be yours. Well, are you going to take the goose?

FLICK. Never, sir, never! but take notice, I shall summons you for the bet—it was a legal one.

TURBY. As you please, sir—then I shall pay the goose into court. *(goes up and puts goose into basket)*

FLICK. *(R., aside)* If I quarrel with Turby, I shall have to break off with Clara! Confound the goose—I must give it away to some one. *(aloud)* Hand it over, Turby. *(TURBY gives goose to him)*

TURBY. If you hash it with plenty of onions and cayenne pepper you won't taste it. *(goes to fireplace, L., and sits down)*

FLICK. *(aside)* Let me see, did I ever give young Bonser anything for saving my life? really I don't think I ever have. It seems d——d ungrateful. Poor fellow! I'll send him the goose—it will look attentive. *Exit with goose, c. to L.*

TURBY. I advise you to cook it as soon as possible— it won't keep much longer. Confound that maid! is she going to leave this hamper here all day? *(calling at door c.)* Now, then, are you going to clear this mess away, or perhaps you'd like me to do it. *(kicks hamper)* Holloa, what's that? *(takes a letter out)* A letter for Clara from her aunt. Clara—Clara!

Enter CLARA and MRS. TURBY, R. D.

Why don't you use your eyes? here's a letter for you. Wait a moment—I'll be back soon.

Exit TURBY, c. to L.

Mrs. T. What can your aunt have to say?

CLARA. (*opening letter and reading*) "The day after tomorrow you are twenty-one." Why, this was written a week ago. (*reading*) "I wish to show your father that I am grateful to him for having won my suit."

Mrs. T. Poor creature! she was quite in the wrong; but your father is such a clever man.

CLARA. (*reading*) "So I send you a goose as a Michaelmas present; you will find it remarkably well stuffed." (*speaking*) What can the poor old lady mean?

Mrs. T. Give me the letter. (*opens it*) Ah! here's a post script written by your cousin on the other side. (*reading*) "My aunt remains as eccentric as ever, she has forgotten to tell you that she has placed a pocket-book containing five hundred pounds in notes within the goose."

CLARA. Five hundred pounds! my goose stuffed with five hundred pounds in notes, within the goose.

Mrs. T. The darling old lady! I'd give my best gown merely to kiss her. Bless her good heart. Five hundred pounds. Why, it's a fortune. Clara, my love, you're an heiress. Let's tell your dear father. Where is he? He'll go crazy with joy. (*runs to the door at back and calls*) Mr. Turby—Turby, life. (*to CLARA*) Look after that dear old goose.

CLARA. How I long to see Mr. Bonser. Now I can, without fear, give him my hand.

Enter TURBY, C. from L.

TURBY. Once for all, Mrs. Turby, and don't let me have to repeat it, I won't have you calling my name all over the town, as if I was a witness afraid to appear. What's the matter?

Mrs. T. (R.) Oh, that dear, dear sister of yours—such a surprise—run across the road and pay the goose into the bank.

TURBY. (C.) Pay the goose into the bank? what does the woman mean—are you mad?

CLARA. (L.) Yes, yes—we are almost crazy with joy. I can't speak for happiness—read this letter! (*gives letter*)

Mrs. T. (R.) Oh, that dear woman! I'll send her at Christmas the fattest turkey in the county.

TURBY. (*looks at letter, then seems bewildered—they lead him to a chair*) Oh, lud—oh, lud—oh, lud! Is there any brandy in the house?—and I have paid away that goose to Flickster.

Mrs. T. Paid the goose away to Flickster!

CLARA. But he will return it?

TURBY. Let us hope for the best. As he is ignorant of the contents, he may act honestly. (*passionately*) Don't stand staring about in that manner, but send the servant after him.

He has to pass two public-houses on his way home, and if he's not at the first, he's sure to be at the second.

MRS. TURBY *crosses and exits, C. to L.*

CLARA. Oh, oh, oh! my five hundred pounds all gone—gone—gone!

TURBY. Listen to me, Clara. If Flickster won't give up the goose, you must marry him directly, or he may cut the family.

CLARA. Marry him? no, sir! I'd sooner make him a present of the money. (*crosses to R.*)

TURBY. What, what! not marry him? let him spend your five hundred pounds by himself? Would you drive your old father to drinking? (FLICKSTER *speaks outside, L.*) Here he comes!—not a word about the money. Keep your mouth shut, or we are ruined. (CLARA *sits in chair L. of R., table*)

FLICKSTER *C. from L., followed by MAID, who takes up hamper, and exits, R. D.*

FLICK. (L.) It is really a most singular fact that I can't take a glass of ale without some of your people spying me. I don't like it, sir!

TURBY. (*approaching him, R. C., and sniffing*) It was not ale, Flickster, its brandy. (*aside*) By this extravagance, I know he's found the money.

FLICK. (L. C.) I'm in a hurry—what do you want now?

TURBY. (*coaxingly*) Won't you step in and rest a little, Flickster. It's so seldom we can catch hold of you now-a-days. Why don't you come and drink here, instead of going to nasty public-houses. Clara, my dear, go and fetch some wine—half a bottle, and mind you don't shake it. *Exit CLARA, R. D.*

FLICK. (L., *aside*) What is old Turby up to? he never gives wine for nothing. He can't want me to accept a bill.

TURBY. (*aside*) I must be diplomatic. (*caloud, blandly*) How is your poor old mother, Flickster, my boy.

Enter MARY, R. D. with wine, places it on table, and exits C. to L.

Ah! there's a fine woman, if you like. What eyes—what eyes—what eyes! big as eggs. They are come. Flickster, sit down, my boy, and take a glass of wine. (FLICKSTER *sits L. of table, TURBY R., pulling the tray and wine to his side*) Flickster, allow me to assist you. (*fills one glass, sips, smacks his lips*) Ah, that is wine—wine of the right sort. You don't get such wine every day.

FLICK. (*annoyed*) And you see determined I shall have none now.

TURBY. Eh? what, dear me, why that girl has put the gasses on this side of the table. (*gives glass*—FLICKSTER *seizes the decanter, fills a glass and drinks it off—about to fill another, TURBY stops him.*) You drink too fast, Flickster—if you drink so fast you don't get the right flavour. (*taking decanter and drinking himself*) Your health, jolly old Flickster, I never saw you looking so nice. You don't know how nice you're looking.

FLICK. (*uneasy*) The same to you—you're looking pretty tidy. I'd better go—I know it's a sell. (*rising*) Good bye, Turby.

TURBY. (*stopping him*) Nonsense, old boy, I won't hear of it. Stop and take another glass. (*fills his own glass*—FLICKSTER *seizes the decanter, fills his own glass, and is about to drink, when TURBY takes hold of his arm and brings him down*) You're a very easy fellow to do, Flickster, my boy. Now, did you really fancy I meant you to keep that goose? ha, ha, ha! Now, I'll be bound to say you did.

FLICK. (*L. C.*) It did look like it.

TURBY. (*R. C.*) Ha, ha, ha! I've sold you—I'll tell 'em all at the club, I will. What an opinion you must have of me. Of course I was only joking. Here, you stupid fellow, send it me back, and you shall have a beauty.

FLICK. You may give me another if you like, Turby, but it's no use sending back the old one.

TURBY. No, no, I shan't give you another, unless you return the one you have. I wouldn't have it said in earnest, that I ever gave you such a thing.

FLICK. But I haven't got it.

TURBY. (*aside*) I knew he had found the money. (*aloud*) Come, send me back that goose, and you shall have the finest in the market!

FLICK. (*aside*) What is he up to? (*aloud*) What does a fine goose cost, Turby?

TURBY. Oh, a tremendous price—an awful sum—ten or twelve shillings, Flickster; but I owe you a goose, and hang money—it shan't stand in the way.

FLICK. It won't do, Turby, you've said too much. If you offer me twelve shillings for that seedy goose, it must be worth a great deal more. You're just the fellow who'd like to get five hundred pounds worth of goods for half-a-sovereign.

TURBY. (*aside*) Five hundred pounds! it's all over—he knows about it.

FLICK. (*aside*) What a fool I was not to have examined the goose!

TURBY. (*very seriously*) On your honour, Flickster, did you examine the bird?

FLICK. (*knowingly winks*) Ah, didn't I just!

TURBY. And—now, no equivocation—*what* did you find in it?

FLICK. You know as well as I do.

TURBY. Did you find anything?

FLICK. I should think so.

TURBY. What, under the right wing?

FLICK. (*aside*) He's dodging me. (*aloud*) No, it wasn't under the right wing. (*aside*) That goose had clearly got valuables concealed about its person.

TURBY. Mr. Flickster, I insist upon a straightforward answer. On your oath, sir, did you find a pocket-book in that goose?

FLICK. A pocket-book! (*aside*) There's my luck! hang it, what a fool I was to give it to Bonser! By heaven, I'll never make another present as long as I live.

TURBY. (*in anger*) Flickster, listen to me. Give me back that pocket-book, or I'll give you in charge for stealing the five hundred pounds contained in it.

FLICK. Five hundred pounds! (*aside*) I must rush to Bonser. (*aloud, and making for door*) I shall not stop to be insulted in this manner. *Exit in a hurry, c. to L.*

TURBY. He's off—he's off! and the railway station close by. I must give that fellow in charge.

Rushes to door, meets BONSER, who enters, c. from R.

Get out of the way, sir! Do you hear, sir? get out of the way!

BONSER. Where's Mr. Flickster? I insist upon seeing him, Mr. Turby!

TURBY. D——n it, get out of the way, sir, or I shall never catch him. Let me go.

BONSER. I insist upon seeing Mr. Flickster! where is he? he has insulted me! he has given me a goose.

TURBY. (*becoming very polite*) A goose! pray step in, Mr. Bonser, I beg of you. Very fine weather for the time of year, isn't it? What is the goose like?

BONSER. Like, sir! why, like to breed a pestilence.

TURBY. That's the one—that's the one! and old Flickster dared to send it to you—to you, my dear worthy young man! *but he shall apologise for it, or—*

BONSER. Sir, he had that amount of impudence.

FLICKSTER *appears at door, c. from L., listening.*

TURBY. (R.) If you yourself hadn't told me of it, I never should have believed it. Disgusting! and what did you do with that goose, may I ask?

BONSER. (C.) Do with it! I ordered it to be thrown away.

FLICK. (down L.) Thrown away—where?

TURBY. You here, Mr. Flickster—I insist upon—

FLICK. Don't speak! (to BONSER) Then you refuse to accept my present?

BONSER. (indignantly) I hurl that goose at your head, Mr. Flickster!

FLICK. Thank goodness! then the goose still belongs to me!

TURBY. Don't mind him, Bonser, only answer me. And where was it thrown to, my good young man?

FLICK. (pulling BONSER to him, L.) As you refuse my present, where can I find it?

TURBY. (pulling BONSER to him, R.) Don't tell him—don't tell him! tell me quietly, and you shall come back again and have thirty shillings a week!

FLICK. (pulling again) Hang it, sir, I want my goose back. Where is it?

BONSER. (indignantly) Where it ought to be! go to the house where I live, (TURBY and FLICKSTER make a start up stage) and if you want to find the dusthole, (they turn back again) go down the garden, (another false start) turn to the left, where you'll see (back again) a hedge! jump over the hedge, and at the back you will see (another start) an enormous Newfoundland dog.

TURBY. (back again) Does he bark?

BONSER. No, he only bites. At his side you will see your goose rotting in the sun.

TURBY. He only bites—no matter—to the dusthole—to the dusthole!

(turns up stage, sees FLICKSTER at door—they struggle, each endeavouring to get first, shouting, "To the dusthole—to the dusthole!" Exit, C. to L.)

BONSER. What can all this mean? I must see Clara and get her to explain this mystery.

Enter CLARA, R. D.

CLARA. (R.) Ah! William, I am the most unfortunate girl living. I shall go crazy, like poor aunt, I know I shall.

BONSER. (L.) What do you mean, Clara? tell me what has caused this excitement.

CLARA. If I speak, I shall burst into tears. Read this letter—it is from my aunt—poor eccentric old lady. I have had five hundred pounds sent me, and it is lost. (*gives letter*)

BONSER. (*having read it*) Poor girl! you may well feel unhappy. Why did not your father trust me? did he fancy that I would have taken a mean advantage of a mistake?

CLARA. Hurry after Mr. Flickster! the money is as much yours as mine. Force that man to give it up to you.

BONSER. If he does not, he shall not live to spend your fortune.

CLARA. Quick, quick! and let me know the result immediately. I shall be in agony until your return. *Exit, R. D.*

(*BONSER is going out, when FLICKSTER and TURBY are heard quarrelling outside, and PEOPLE laughing.*)

Enter FLICKSTER and TURBY, their clothes torn and their faces dirty, C. from L.

TURBY. (*falls into chair, R.—to BONSER, who comes down, C.*) You scoundrel! how dared you say that dog only bit—he gnaws dreadfully!

FLICK. (R.) I hereby give you notice, Mr. Turby, that I shall bring an action for assault. You threw me on to the dustheap.

BONSER. (C., to TURBY) Oh, sir, why did you suspect me?

TURBY. You who have been in a lawyer's office to ask me such a question! But the goose has gone.

FLICK. I'll swear there was no goose there.

BONSER. Not there! then somebody must have carried it off within the last ten minutes. Let me go and look for it myself.

FLICK. (*stops him*) No! if he finds it he will keep it.

TURBY. Dear me! dear me! what shall I do? I'll send the town crier about and offer to buy all the bad geese in the neighbourhood.

BONSER. Tell me, sir. Should you know the goose if you saw it?

TURBY. Should I—should I know it? Ah, Bonser, know it! I shall never forget the expression of that animal's face. Rush, my worthy young man—you are the only one I can trust, and offer five shillings a-piece for all the geese in the neighbourhood which are not fit to be eaten.

BONSER. I will do all I can, sir.

Runs off, C. to L.

(*a pause—FLICKSTER seats himself on the office chair—TURBY turns and sees him.*)

TURBY. Now, sir! what are you stopping here for?

FLICK. Turby, I'm waiting the arrival of the goose.

TURBY. You shan't wait here, sir. I'll give you in charge.

FLICK. Turby, you can't give me in charge—you may bring an action for trespass, but that is all.

TURBY. (*aside*) What a partner he would have made. (*aloud*) If you stop here, I shall go outside and lock the door.

FLICK. Then I shall proceed against you for false imprisonment.

TURBY. (*aside*) Heavens, what genius! I cannot hate such a man. (*aloud*) I shall ask you three times, as required by law. Will you go, Mr. Flickster? (FLICKSTER *whistles*) Flickster, I inform you, without prejudice, mind—that I shall have to knock you down. Will you leave the room? (FLICKSTER *begins singing*) This is the third time of asking! are you going out of the house? (FLICKSTER *deliberately leaves chair and goes to fireplace, L., and begins stirring the fire*—TURBY *rushing at him*) You shan't stir my fire, sir—put that poker down.

(*they struggle, knock books and ornaments off mantel-piece—in the meantime*)

Enter MEN and WOMEN, C. D. from L., with geese in their hands.

(*going to them*) Come along, my good people. (FLICKSTER *does the same*) You shan't have one of them, Flickster—they were all ordered by me. (*goes to WOMAN, R.*) Show me your goose! (*smells it*) I'll give you five shillings for it.

FLICK. I'll give you six!

TURBY. (*who has examined the goose*) Let him have it—it isn't the right one. If he won't pay you, come to me, and I will sue him. (*a MAN comes down, L., TURBY goes to him*) Why, confound you, sir, this goose is fit to eat.

1st MAN. Yes, it's a beauty, sir.

TURBY. Take it away directly, sir! do you think I want good wholesome geese like that? (*throws it at him*)

FLICK. (*to a MAN down L.*) Here, I'll buy yours.

TURBY. (*R. of MAN*) No, I'll buy it!

FLICK. (*L. of MAN*) I'll give you ten shillings for it!

TURBY. I'll give you a pound.

FLICK. Let him have it—it isn't the right one. (*laughs*)

2nd MAN. (*to TURBY*) You'd better have my goose—it's the worst here!

TURBY. Let me see it.

2nd MAN. No, I shan't do that—I never thought it would fetch anything when I picked it up.

FLICK. Picked it up! that must be the one. (*whispers to MAN, L.*)

TURBY. (*aside*) Flickster shan't have it. (*whispers to MAN, R.*)

2nd MAN. (*to TURBY*) Pooh! why it's the worst in the village—nearly old enough to walk alone. (*FLICKSTER whispers again*) Done! you shall have it. (*gives goose*) I know it will suit, for it has been in my shop these three weeks.

FLICK. (*groaning*) I shan't have any more of these geese!

ALL. (*advancing*) Here's my goose—and mine—and mine!

TURBY. Get out of the place, all of you—get out.

(*squabbling, all go off, C. to L., but the 2nd MAN, who remains expostulating with FLICKSTER—TURBY turns and sees him.*)

What are you doing here? get out!

Turns MAN out—FLICKSTER throws goose, which hits TURBY on the back.

Why did you throw that goose at me?

FLICK. (*R.*) Why did you stand in the way, when you knew I was going to throw the goose? I say, old Turby, my boy, you've been done.

Enter BONSER, C. D. from L.

TURBY. (*R.*) I say, Flickster, my fine fellow—you've made a good thing of it!

FLICK. (*L.*) A sovereign for an unpleasant goose.

TURBY. You were let in for thirty shillings. The geese were a little too high, weren't they, Flickster?

BONSER. (*coming down, C.*) It's no good quarrelling about it—the notes are lost for ever now. The goose has been taken away by the dustman.

TURBY. (*R.*) Good ready money chucked into the gutter. I shall swear we never received it. (*Dustman's bell outside, L.*) I am the most unfortunate man alive. What business had I to go paying the bird away? Whenever I am liberal, I always lose by it. I'll never pay another bet as long as I live.

FLICK. (*L., aside*) What does that bell mean? (*going out tip-toe towards door*)

TURBY. Such a lump of money too—how can I repair the loss—I must keep on Brown's Chancery suit for two years longer. (*dustman's bell again—TURBY turns and sees FLICKSTER stealing off, C.*) What the dence is Flickster up to?

BONSER. Quick! quick! it is the dustman's cart passing!

DUSTMAN. (*without—bell*) Dust ho! dust ho!

BONSER. That cart must contain the goose!

(*TURBY rushes after FLICKSTER, pulls him back by the tails of his coat—FLICKSTER escapes—TURBY follows—FLICKSTER turns, drops his head against TURBY's chest, which knocks his hat over his eyes—they struggle off, C. D. to L.*)

TURBY. Villain, you shall not have it!

BONSER. (*looking out at door*) How they rush across the market place—now Turby dashes to the front—now Flickster nears him—he leads him by a nose—what do I see? Turby has seized Flickster by the coat tail—Heaven grant that it may not give way—I plainly perceive the neck of the goose hanging over the cart-side! (*cry of "Dust ho!"—bell*) Turby throws the dustman a coin and seizes it! (*shouts without, "Ha, ha, ha!"*) Flickster grasps at the prize, but in vain—(*shouts again—bell*) Now they are returning—Turby bounds over the stones like a rabbit—Flickster does not lose ground—Flickster has seized the goose—Heavens! here they are.

Shouts, "Ha, ha, ha!"—Dustman's bell until TURBY and FLICKSTER are on the stage, C. from L., with the goose between them, TURBY the neck and FLICKSTER the hind parts.

TURBY. (*R.*) Let go, you villain!

FLICK. (*L.*) Let go, you scoundrel!

TURBY. By heavens, Flickster, I'll kick you if you don't let go!

FLICK. Let go directly, or I swear I'll bite your fingers!

(*they fall backwards and forwards, until the goose comes in two—they both fall, TURBY R., FLICKSTER L.*)

TURBY. (*examining his half*) Confound him—he has the money in his half!

FLICK. (*examining his half*) Hang it, I'm done—Turby has the notes after all!

TURBY. In this crisis, sir, we may as well speak the truth—have you the money?

FLICK. Sir, further deception is useless, I have!

BONSER. (*C., seizing FLICKSTER's half*) False to the last—the pocket book is not here!

FLICK. I was not bound to criminate myself.

TURBY. But where can the money have got to then—what are we to do now?

FLICK. (*crawling across to TURBY*) Will you go halves if I find the money? (*aside*) I'll promise him half as a blind.

TURBY. Yes, I will! (*aside*) Likely I should give him any, isn't it?

FLICK. (*looking at BONSER*) Well! guess who has it?

TURBY. The dustman!

FLICK. No—guess again! The dustman knows nothing about it.

TURBY. Well then—(*hesitates*)—he can't have concealed the pocket book about me! (*feels in his pockets*)

FLICK. (*pointing to BONSER*) Do you know now?

TURBY. Bonser!

BONSER. (L.) Mr. Flickster, how dare you—I defy you to step outside with me!

FLICK. There, I said nothing, did I? (*crosses to R. D.—aside*) I had better bear false witness against my young neighbour, or else he'll be marrying Clara.

TURBY. (R. C.) Mr. Bonser, have you the money? (*aside*) He has managed it with more talent than ever I gave him credit.

BONSER. (L.) Do you fancy, sir, that I should take advantage of a mistake to swindle you out of five hundred pounds—do you imagine such a thing, Mr. Turby?

TURBY. (*in chair, at table, R.*) Human nature is weak, Mr. Bonser, and five hundred pounds is five hundred pounds—come, give up the money!

FLICK. (R.) Bless you, if he hadn't found the pocket book, do you think that a man with his appetite would have thrown away a goose because it was a little high?

BONSER. After this insult I shall quit the house! (*go'ng*)

FLICK. (*whispering to TURBY*) Stop him—he wants to bolt! (*TURBY rises, rushes to door, puts himself in a fighting attitude*)

BONSER. Mr. Turby, if any other but yourself opposed me I would pull his nose! But my love for Clara protects you. I will speak a few words to her, and leave this town for ever!

TURBY. How dare you love my daughter? (*calling at R.*) Clara! Clara! keep in your own room.

Enter CLARA, R. D.

CLARA. What do you want?

TURBY. Why, I want you to keep away—Mr. Bonser has the money—if he has any affection for you, tell him to give it up, and leave you for ever!

CLARA. I would not insult Mr. Bonser by suspecting him of such a thing.

FLICK. (L.) Look, he has a new hat on! Besides, I remember perfectly seeing him with a red pocket book in his hand.

(*BONSER rushes at FLICKSTER, who seizes a chair—they struggle into L. corner, BONSER stand over FLICKSTER with chair*)

TURBY. (R.) Soothe him, Clara! soothe him! or they'll be breaking my chairs.

FLICK. I apologise; it was only your pocket handkerchief. (*crosses to R.*)

BONSER. (L.) Clara, do you believe this accusation? Tell me—can you imagine me capable of such meanness?

CLARA. Do I believe it! of course not—and to prove it to you I give you my hand. (TURBY sinks into chair, R. C.)

FLICK. (R.) Never mind, Turby, they'll be separated before the week's out.

BONSER. What do you mean, sir?

FLICK. Why, you'll be in the workhouse!

(BONSER rushes at him, but is stopped by CLARA.)

TURBY. Heavens! that I should live to see my own child marry a man with such an appetite, and not even credit at a baker's!

CLARA. Father, you have driven me away from your house—adieu!

As they are going up, enter MAID with letter C. from L.

MAID. A letter from London, for Miss Clara.

TURBY. For my daughter! give it me instantly! (takes letter) *Exit MAID, C. to L.*

CLARA. Give me the letter! (takes it) I am twenty-one, and mistress of my own actions.

TURBY. This comes of letting girls read a lot of stupid law books! I can't complain—I can't complain—it's my own fault.

CLARA. (C.) What do I see? (reads)—“I was dissuaded by your cousin from sending the five hundred pounds inside the goose, as I had wished. I am sorry the delicate surprise I intended has not been carried out, as I have not another goose, I would have sent the money to you in a plum pudding, but your cousin tells me that the notes would have suffered in the boiling, so pray excuse my apparent want of delicacy in sending you the money in the form a cheque, payable at sight.”

TURBY. Heavens! payable at sight—I hope her banker is not blind. (aside) As she is sure to marry Bonser, I had better make friends with him. (crosses to L., between BONSER and CLARA) Bonser, my boy, of all men in the world I would select to guide my child on the stormy paths of life, you are, I say you are—(putting his handkerchief to his eyes, and crossing to L.—CLARA and BONSER retire up)

FLICK. (R.) Don't cry, Mr. Turby! But I must beg of you to understand, Mr. Turby, that you still owe me a goose!

TURBY. Why, how many geese do you want, glutton? You've had one more than you could eat already.

FLICK. (indignantly) I refuse that seedy goose.

TURBY. Very well—very well! that's it, is it? (picking up the two halves of the goose) Now, then, you are all witness that I tender him a goose. (offers the halves)

FLICK. Turby, I, without prejudice mind, give you notice

that I shall pull your nose. I refuse these dividends, and refer the matter to arbitration.

TURBY. As you please, sir. (*advances to AUDIENCE*) Hem, hem! my lord, and gentlemen of the jury—

FLICK. How dare you speak first? how dare you? I shall begin!

TURBY. You shan't, sir—you shan't.

TURBY. } The { plaintiff }
FLICK. } The { defendant } in this case is a—

TURBY. (*to FLICKSTER*) Villain!

FLICK. (*to TURBY*) Scoundrel!

TURBY. That's unprofessional, Flickster. For heaven's sake let's be professional! I suppose I may put in my pleas—you wouldn't rob me of my pleas? (*FLICKSTER nods*) These are my pleas. Firstly—that I never owed you a goose. Secondly—that I have paid you the goose I owe you. Thirdly—that though the goose was a bad one, I had a right to give it to you. Fourthly—that the goose was not a bad one. Fifthly—that you have had the goose and eaten it.

FLICK. Mr. Turby, I deny everything—everything!

TURBY. Then, sir, I leave the case with the arbitrators—I am not afraid. (*to AUDIENCE*) You've heard all the facts of the case—you have seen how Mr. Flickster has acted—how I have acted—how we have all acted in the matter, and—

FLICK. But Mr. Turby, sir!

TURBY. And Mr. Flickster, sir!

(*they commence squabbling and fighting—CLARA and BONSER trying to separate them, as the curtain descends quickly*)

R.

L.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means *Right of the Stage, facing the Audience*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R. C. *Right of Centre*; L. C. *Left of Centre*; D. F. *Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage*; C. D. F. *Centre Door in the Flat*; D. R. C. *Right Door in the Flat*; L. C. F. *Left Door in the Flat*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; 2E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*.

C OF BURLESQUES, OPERAS, AND DRAMAS TO LOAN.

and vocal parts are marked p. v. The figures in columns denote the PRICE per MONTH.—DEPOSIT: TWO MONTHS' HIRE.

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Alatea, burl. p. v.	10	6	Deeds not Words, drama, 11 band		
Surprise, opera, p. v.	2	6	parts ...	7	6
Opera ...	5	0	Dolly, comic opera, p v	15	0
Miss Keating] burl. p. v. 2	6		Ditto, 14 band parts	15	0
Byron, burl. p. v. ...	20	0	Don Cesar de Bazan, drama, p v...	7	6
8 band parts ...	15	0	Don Juan, pent., 4 band parts	3	6
lrl. p. v. ...	10	6	Dreamland, cantata, p v	10	0
Miss Keating] burl. p. v. 5	0		Duenna, opera, p v	3	6
Byron] burl. p. v.	20	0	Duke & Motto, dram., 9 band parts	15	0
8 band parts ...	15	0	Eddystone Kkf, drama, 6 band parts	5	0
v. ...	15	0	Ernani, burl., 9 band parts	10	0
Brave, burl. p. v.	20	0	Esmeralda, burl., p v...	5	0
9 band parts ...	15	0	Ditto, 10 band parts	15	0
1 Afloat, drama, 10 band			Exile, opera, p v	3	6
... ..	10	0	Fair Helen, opera, p v	7	6
lrl., 5 band parts ...	7	6	Fair Rosamond's Bower, burl., p v	10	0
Impostors, farce, p. v. ...	5	0	Fairyland, fairy play, p v	7	0
1 Beast [Keating] p. v. ...	5	0	False Alarms [Braham] opera, p v	2	6
Opera, vocal score ...	3	6	False Alarms [King] opera, p v	3	0
d, opera, p v.	3	4	Fanchette, operetta, p v	5	0
1 Susan, drama, full score	5	0	Farmer, opera, p v	3	6
1 Susan, burl. p. v.	20	0	Farmer, opera, p v	2	6
band parts ...	20	0	Father and Son, drama, 5 band pts	5	0
opera, p. v.	3	6	Field of Cloth of Gold, burl., p v	20	0
, drama, p. v.	5	0	Forest of Bondy, opera, p v	5	0
1 Repaired, p. v. ...	30	0	Fortunio, extrav., 9 band parts	15	0
1 [Byron's] burl. p. v.	15	0	Forty Thieves, opera, p v	2	6
8 band parts ...	10	0	Fra Diavola, burl., p v	20	0
1 [Miss Keating] p. v.	6	0	Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
p. v.	7	6	Frankenstein, burl. 6 band parts	5	6
8 band parts ...	7	6	Frederick the Great, opera, p v	4	0
ore and 3 band parts ...	7	6	Ganem, vocal, 18 band parts	15	0
se, drama, p. v. ...	20	0	Geraldine, p v...	10	0
the Brahmins, burl. p. v. 15	0		Golden Fleece, song, "I'm still ...		
d Sister, opera, p. v.	5	0	flutter," p v	1	0
drama, 1 & 2 violin, basso	8	0	Graziella, cantata, p v	10	0
era, p v	3	0	Guy Mannering, drama, p v	10	0
man, extrav. p v	15	0	Ditto, 6 band parts	5	0
, opera, p v	2	6	Happy Man, p v...	3	6
of Granada, extrav., p v	10	0	Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
n [Reece] comic op. p v	5	0	Hamlet, grave-digger's song and		
andalusia, opera, p v	3	6	accom.	1	0
re, opera, p v	2	6	Hartford Bridge, opera, p v	2	6
Ganges, dra, 6 band pts	10	0	Harvest Home, pastoral cantata	10	0
I, Instrumental of song,			Haunted Mill, p v	6	0
entle Mors	6		Haunted Tower, comic opera, p v		
the Wood, opera, p v...	2	6	Haunted Tower, opera, p v	2	6
ng Fou, burl p v	10	0	He would be an Actor, full score	2	6
[Byron] burl. 8 band pts	15	0	Highland Lassic Ballet, 3 band pts.	3	0
[Byron] burl. p v	20	0	Highland Reel, opera, p v	2	6
[Miss Keating] burl. p v	5	0	High Life below Stairs, song, "All		
opera, p v	7	6	in a Livery"	1	0
a, p v	7	6	House that Jack Built, full score	10	0
vn, drama, 8 band parts	10	0	Ill-treated Trovatore, p v	15	0
ra, p v	5	0	Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
vons, burl. p v	15	0	Illustrious Stranger, p. v.	5	0
Heath, dra. 10 bnd pts	5	0	Invincible, The, opera, p v	10	0
a. p v	2	6	Yvanhoe, burl. p. v.	15	0
Danube, extra. v 4 band			Ditto, 8 band parts	10	0
... ..	5	0	Ision, p. v.	20	0
ife, drama, 9 band pts	10	6	Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
opera, p v	7	6			

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE.

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Jack Sheppard (songs in).....	1	0	Les de Fascination, 8 band parts ...	5	0
Janette's Wedding Day, p. v.	15	0	Patience Penelope, p. v.	10	0
Joan of Arc, burl. p. v.	15	0	Paul and Virginia, opera, p. v.	3	6
Joan of Arc, drama, 4 band parts..	5	0	Peeping Tom of Coventry, opera, p. v.	3	6
Kenilworth, burl. p. v.	20	0	Perdita, burl. p. v.	20	0
King Alfred and the cakes, burl. p. v.	3	0	Pet Dove [Gounod] com. op. full v. sc.	5	0
Lady Godiva, vocal, and 13 band pts.	20	0	Pirates, opera, p. v.	5	0
Lady of Lyons, [Byron] burl. p. v.	15	0	Pizarro, p. v.	3	0
Ditto, 5 band parts	10	0	Ditto, 4 band parts	2	0
La Sonnambula [Byron] burl.	15	0	Peor Soldier, opera, p. v.	2	6
Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0	Prize, The, opera, p. v.	2	6
Little Red Riding Hood, p. v.	7	5	Parse, The, opera	2	6
Loan of a Lover, p. v.	5	0	Russ in Boots, [Planché] full score	7	6
Lock and Key, opera, p. v.	2	6	Russ in Boots [Miss Keating] p. v.	5	0
Lodolska, opera, p. v.	2	6	Quaker, p. v.	5	0
Lord Lovel, p. v.	7	6	Raymond and Agnes, 3 band parts	3	0
Lost and Found	5	0	Raymond and Agnes, opera, p. v.	7	6
Love in a Village, p. v.	5	0	Rob Roy, p. v.	5	0
Love in a Village, opera, p. v.	3	6	Ditto, 9 band parts	5	0
Love's Limit, comic opera, p. v.	7	6	Robin Hood, burl. p. v.	15	0
Luke the Labourer, 6 band parts..	2	6	Ditto, 8 band parts	15	0
Macbeth, tragedy, v. score & 8 b. pts.	19	0	Robinson Crusoe, p. v.	6	0
Macbeth Travesty, p. v.	7	6	Review, p. v.	5	0
Ditto, 4 band parts	5	0	Robert Macaire, 4 band parts	2	6
Madame Angot, p. v.	5	0	Rosina, opera, p. v.	3	6
Maid and Maggie, drama, p. score...	3	6	Sentinel, p. v.	6	0
Maid and Maggie, [Byron] burl. p. v.	20	0	Ditto, 14 band parts	15	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0	Sleeping Beauty [Miss Keating] p. v.	5	0
Maid of Mill, opera, p. v.	5	0	Signor Pantaloon, p. v.	20	0
Maid of the Mill, opera, p. v.	2	6	Swiss Swains, v. sc. opening chorus	5	0
Maid with Milking Pail (song)	1	0	Sister's Sacrifice, 11 band parts	15	0
Manager Strutt, 8 band parts	5	0	Sweethearts and Wives, p. v.	5	0
Mariner's Compass, drama, 11 b. p.	15	0	Swiss Cottage, p. v.	5	0
Marriage by Lantern Light, p. v.	5	0	Ditto, 6 band parts	5	6
Marriage Figaro, C'tess pt, with bass	5	0	Tlave, The, opera, p. v.	5	0
Mary Turner, p. v.	10	0	Son-in-law, opera, p. v.	3	6
Ditto, 12 band parts	15	0	St. David's Day, opera, p. v.	3	6
Masaniello, burl. p. v.	20	0	Siege of Belgrade, opera, p. v.	2	6
Masaniello, drama, 4 band parts	3	6	Shepherd of Cournoilles, p. v.	3	6
Masaniello, opera, p. v.	10	0	Sardanapalus, tragedy, entire music	7	6
Matrimony, opera, p. v.	3	6	Trombalcazar, p. v.	7	6
Mazeppa, burl. p. v.	20	0	Trooper's Horn, full score	7	6
Ditto, 10 band parts	10	0	Tell with a vengeance, p. v.	7	6
Medea, burl. full vocal score	10	0	Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Ditto, 8 band parts	10	0	Tale of Mystery, opera, p. v.	3	0
Merchant of Venice (unpub. songs of)	2	0	Timour the Tartar, opera, p. v.	4	6
Midas, p. v.	5	0	Turnpike Gate, opera, p. v.	2	6
Mids. Night's Dream, [Bishop] p. v.	7	6	Three and the Deuce, opera, p. v.	2	6
Military Billy Taylor, p. v.	15	0	Villikins and Dinah, p. v.	7	6
Miller and Men, burl. p. v.	10	0	Vampire, 4 band parts	5	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	10	0	Watch and Wait, drama, 8 band parts	7	6
Miller and Men, drama, 5 band parts	7	6	White Horse of Peppers, p. v.	2	6
Miller and his Men, opera, p. v.	5	0	Ditto, 6 band parts	2	6
Miller Out-witted, 3 band parts	2	6	William Tell [Brough] p. v.	2	6
Minerali, 3 band parts	2	6	White Cat [Keating] p. v.	3	0
Mischief-Making, vocal & 13 b. pts	10	0	White Cat [Planché] full score	5	0
Monsieur Jacques, p. v.	5	0	Whittington and Cat, 7 band parts	5	0
Mother Goose, harl., orig. p. v.	5	0	Whittington, Junior, & his Cat	15	0
Motto, burl. p. v.	10	6	Welsh Girl, overture, full score	2	6
Ditto, 9 band parts	3	0	Willow Pattern Plate, 9 band parts	7	6
My Grandmother, opera, p. v.	2	6	Wallace, Hero of Scott'd, opera, p. v.	3	6
My Poll and my Partner Joe, burl. p. v.	15	0	Waterman, p. v.	2	6
No, 4 band parts	2	6	Who's the Heir, operetta, p. v.	4	0
No Song, no Supper, opera, p. v.	5	0	Who stole the clock, opera bouffe, p. v.	7	6
Nurseryrhyma, Fairy play, p. v.	5	0	Wedding Day, opera, p. v.	5	0
Of Age to-morrow, opera	3	6	Widows Bewitched, operetta, p. v.	10	0
Orpheus and Eurydice, [Brough] p. v.	2	6	Windsor Castle [Burnaby] op. burl. p. v.	2	6
Padlock, The, opera, p. v.	3	6	Yellow Dwarf [Miss Keating] p. v.	3	6

BROTHER BILL AND ME."

An original Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

WILLIAM E. SUTER, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

"*Sarah's Young Man*," "*Quiet Family*," "*Give me my Wife*,"
"*John Wopps*," "*Rifle Volunteer*," "*My Wife's Husband*,"
&c., &c.

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SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
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122, NASSAU STREET.

BROTHER BILL AND ME.

First performed, August, 1858.

Characters.

MR. ARCHIBALD NOODLE (*First Old Man*) MR. FITZROY.
MR. SIMON SQUIB (*Second Low Comedy*) MR. ROBERTS.
WILLIAM WIGGLES (*Light Comedy or Eccentric*)..... MR. BILLINGTON.
BENJAMIN WIGGLES (*First Low Comedy*) MR. J. L. TOOLE.
POLICEMEN

MISS SERAPHINA NOODLE (*Old Woman*) MRS. GARTHWAITE.
WILHELMINA NOODLE (*Walking Lady*) MISS ALLENSON.
MARTHA WIGGLES (*First Soubrette*) ... MISS ELIZA WEBB.

Costumes—MODERN.

BROTHER BILL AND ME.

SCENE.—*Comfortable Apartment, neatly furnished. Door, C.; doors, R. and L.; tables, chairs, and sofa, L. C.; breakfast table, R. C., at which are seated SERAPHINA, C., WILHELMINA, L. C., MR. NOODLE, L. of table, SIMON SQUIB, R. of table.*

WILHEL. Nothing more, thank you, aunt; I have made an excellent breakfast.

SERAPH. And you, Mr. Squib, have eaten nothing.

SIMON. And that is much more than I have lately taken, I assure you. Heigho!

SERAPH. Brother, any more coffee.

MR. N. No thank you, Serry—I have had my usual five cups, (*rising*) and I never go beyond; for even coffee should be taken in moderation.

SIMON. (*aside, rising*) Oh, lord! he calls half a gallon of coffee a moderate dose!

SERAPH. (*calling*) Martha! (*all come forward*)

Enter MARTHA, L. door, and takes away breakfast things, L. door.

SERAPH. (R.) I am sorry, Mr. Squib, to see you always so melancholy.

SIMON. (R. C.) I am sickening for the mumps, I know I am.

MR. Noodle, you have used me shamefully.

MR. N. (L. C.) Bless me! what do you mean?

SIMON. Don't you call yourself my father's friend?

MR. N. Certainly—our friendship dates from boyhood.

SIMON. Didn't you write to him that you had a fascinating niece?

MR. N. Well, was not that true?

SIMON. Yes, but—

MR. N. And he replied, that he had a most delightful son.

SIMON. Yes, I know—and that was true too: but didn't you also say that you were certain a mutual affection would arise between the two juveniles, if once they met?

MR. N. And that is true too.

SIMON. No, it isn't; for I came to London, prepared to fall in love, and I did—for I found your niece a striking girl, but not at all struck with me; and you ought to be ashamed of yourself, for bringing me to town under false pretences.

WILHEL. (L.) Pray, Mr. Squib, do not be angry with my uncle. I would love you if I could, but really—

MR. N. (L. C.) She can't—that is, she—she—in short, she can't: but you'll try, won't you, Willy? just to please your old nunkey—who would so like to see the daughter of his poor brother wedded to the son of his old friend.

WILHEL. (L.) Well, Mr. Squib and myself may be friend too; but for the rest—

SIMON. (R.) Friendship!—pooh!—I want love, and a good deal of it, and a woman's friendship is no use—it's as intipid as a loin of veal without any stuffing.

WILHEL. (*laughing*) Delightful comparison!

SIMON. I've got a rival somewhere—I am sure of it; and what's worse, he must be a very handsome and a remarkably agreeable fellow, or else before this I should certainly have cut him out. But, (*crosses, L. C.*) Miss Wilhelmina, don't let him cross my path; for since I can't cut him out of your heart, hang me if I don't cut him out of the world!

WILHEL. (L.) Sir, you are becoming impertinent! (*goes up*)

MR. N. (L. C.) Don't be rude, Simon: though I believe you are right, and that Willy has a predilection for somebody though she won't own it—

SIMON. (L.) You ought to have discovered that before you sent for me. Curse me, if it isn't one of the worst cases of swindling I ever met with.

MR. N. Come, come, don't be angry; you know well that I am most anxious to see you one of my family. My niece will not have you, so what say you to my sister here?

SIMON. (*starting*) What!

MR. N. She's an amiable creature.

SERAPH. (R. C.) Oh! (*simpering*) brother, how can you talk so!

MR. N. How she has been suffered to remain so long single is a mystery to me.

SIMON. (*aside*) It doesn't astonish me a bit.

MR. N. She is even now, I know, most anxious to be married.

SIMON. That isn't at all unlikely.

SERAPH. (*simpering*) Oh, brother, how can you say so!—you know that if inclined—

MR. N. To be sure she is no longer young.

SERAPH. (*indignantly*) Brother!

SIMON. Young! no, I should think not: she is as old as my grandmother, and not half so good looking. (*SERAPHINA flounces about in a rage*)

MR. N. Simon, Simon, I am ashamed of you! and I insist that you instantly apologise, or—or—in short—apologise.

SIMON. Well, I—(*crosses to C.*) I didn't mean to hurt her feelings.

MR. N. (L.) There, there, Serry—you hear.

SIMON. (C.) And I hope you will excuse me, ma'am, for calling you old.

MR. N. (*with great satisfaction*) There, there.

SIMON. For we can't help our years, and, after all, I dare say you are not so old as you look. (*SERAPHINA shrieks and sinks into chair, R. C.*—WILHELMINA, R., endeavours to console her)

MR. N. Oh! worse than ever—worse than ever! Hold your tongue, sir—hold your tongue! (*SIMON goes up*)

Enter MARTHA, L. door.

Oh, Martha, I have something to say to you—to you and to the new man-servant. Call him.

MARTHA. What, Benjamin?

MR. N. (C.) No, no, John; you know I arranged to call him John, for to have a servant named Benjamin is not convenient; it—it—in short, it's not convenient.

MARTHA. (L. C.) No, nor it ain't convenient to him to do any work, and he won't—does nothing but talk about his brother Bill.

MR. N. Bill! a low term! it—it—in short, it's vulgar. His references were good: we must give him a fair trial, and I dare say he will improve. Call him.

MARTHA. (*calling as she goes*) John!—d'y'e hear—John!

Exit, L. door.

BEN. (*without*) There ain't no such individual in the place.

MR. N. Come here, sir.

Enter BENJAMIN, L. door.

BEN. Ah, you may call me *sir*; that's more respectful.

MR. N. (C.) Once more, sir, let me tell you that your name is John.

BEN. (L. C.) No it ain't—it's Benjamin.

MR. N. I insist that while in this house you answer to the name of John.

BEN. I'll try, but 'twill be very difficult. I once changed my dog's name from Pincher to Towser, 'cause 'twas prettier, but it was full three months afore he'd wag his tail at it.

MR. N. Now, be sure you remember that John—

BEN. Means Benjamin: but why not call me Ben? that would be short, and agreeable, and friendly and familiar-like between us.

MR. N. No, John. I am determined to—to—in short, John—

BEN. Short John—very well. 'Tisn't every chap that get's his master to stand godfather to him.

MR. N. And you must not object if I tell you in advance—

BEN. Oh no—I shan't object to anything in advance, if it's only a quarter's wages.

MR. N. Booby!

WILHEL. (R., *aside, her eyes fixed on BENJAMIN*) The likeness is amazing!

MR. N. Martha tells me you will do no work.

BEN. Certainly not; I haven't been used to it.

MR. N. Then why did you come here?

BEN. To try if the work would suit me.

MR. N. But you haven't tried the work.

BEN. No, but I've looked at it, and I see it wouldn't agree with me.

MR. N. Then, pray, sir, what induced you to apply here?

BEN. I'll tell you; you see, brother Bill and me——

MR. N. No, no, never mind that—you shall have a week's fair trial, and if then—but, I had forgotten—I have an important letter to write. I'll speak to you and Martha presently. I shan't be long, I—I—in short, I shan't be long. *Exit, R. door.*

SIMON. (*has come forward, L.—to BENJAMIN*) Ha, ha, ha! It strikes me that you are a regular nondescript.

BEN. Does it; and you looks to me as if you was a little in that line yourself.

WILHEL. (R., *aside, her eyes still fixed on BENJAMIN*) 'Tis perfectly bewildering.

BEN. (L. C., *aside, catching WILHELMINA's eye*) How that young lady is a devouring of my phizygognoimy; she's discovered, perhaps, that I've seen better days, and admires me accordingly. It seems to me as if I'd seen her somewhere afore. Thee, she's staring again, and I don't like it—it's vulgar.

Exit, L. door.

SIMON. (*aside, down L. corner*) How she fixed her eyes on that John Benjamin. It can't be possible that *he's* my rival! If he was—(*threatening—goes up*)

SERAPH. (C.) Wilhelmina, my love, how earnestly you fixed your gaze on that young man.

WILHEL. (R. C.) Yes; you have not forgotten that, six months since, I went to Mrs. Bounceabout's *soirée*?

SERAPH. Certainly not; for you confided to me the secret that, on that evening, a gentleman danced himself into your good graces, and you have, I am certain, been thinking of him ever since; but, what then——

WILHEL. Why, my dear aunt——

SERAPH. Ah, I see; *that is* the man, and he has assumed the character of a servant to——

WILHEL. Aunt, what can you be thinking of! The gentleman I danced with was tall and handsome, and this man——

SERAPH. Exactly—does not at all answer the description. My dear, I beg your pardon.

WILHEL. But this John, or Benjamin, or whatever may be his name, is the perfect photograph of a person who was at that same party, and who appeared particularly intimate with——

SERAPH. The gentleman you danced with, as aforesaid—then, depend upon it, this friend—if he it really be—is here to aid in some way some sort of plot, and that you will soon see the—the gentleman you danced with.

WILHEL. Oh! (*pleased*) if I thought that—but, (*crosses, C.*) I will call him, and if possible, resolve my doubts as to this likeness: John! Mr. John!

Enter BENJAMIN, L. door.

BEN. You're very polite; but you mean Benjamin—yes, mum.

WILHEL. (C.) Service is new to you, I think?

BEN. (L. C., *aside*) She's found it out. There's no concealing one's natural dignity.

WILHEL. You have moved in a different sphere?

BEN. Yes, and I've moved in a different coat, for I can't move at all in this. The servant that *purceeded* me must have been a little 'un.

WILHEL. At Mrs. Bounceabout's, six months since——

BEN. (*aside*) Then that's where I seed her, when I was there with brother Bill.

WILHEL. There was a gentleman who danced in an extraordinary manner, and who, altogether, made himself very conspicuous.

BEN. (*aside*) That was me; when I goes out I likes to be somebody.

WILHEL. That same gentleman spoiled my new moire antique dress; and, if I mistake not, you are he.

BEN. No, I ain't. (*aside*) It won't do to own it now, or she'll stop that moses antique out of my wages. (*aloud*) Me, mum! —no, mum, you've made a mistake, mum. I never would dance, and I never did go to no parties.

WILHEL. (*aside to SERAPHINA*) He won't own it; but I feel almost certain that——

SERAPH. (R. C., to WILHELMINA) My dear, you were wrong to speak of the dress, because——

(*they go up talking—SIMON comes forward, L.*)

BEN. (C.) That's the worst of going into society—one is sure to be recognized.

SIMON. (L., *aside*) All that whispering is very suspicious—he is only a slavey (*fixing his eyes on BENJAMIN*), and very ugly; but there's no accounting for a woman's taste.

BEN. (*aside*) Now, that chap's eyeing me—perhaps *he's* a going to recognize me now!

SIMON. (L. C.) Have you any reason to suppose that Miss Wilhelmina is in love with you?

BEN. (C.) It wouldn't surprise me; but it would be no use, for she's not my sort.

SIMON. Did you ever see her until you came here?

BEN. (*aside*) Now he's trying the pumping dodge. (*aloud*) Certainly not—never! 'tisin't likely. (*aside*) It's very mean to make so much fuss about a moses antique!

SIMON. (*aside*) No, no; it can't be this fellow. (*aloud*) John, you are awfully ugly!

BEN. Well, now, that's very odd.

SIMON. What?

BEN. Why, that's just what I was thinking about you—only I didn't like to say it. We're a pair of—"handsome is a handsome does"—chaps: if you wants to see beauty, y'
should look at my brother Bill—you see brother Bill and,
(SIMON goes

Enter MR. NOODLE, R. door.

MR. N. Now, then, John.

BEN. Benjamin—yes, sir.

MR. N. (c.) Silence;—and Martha. Where is Martha?

Enter MARTHA, L. door.

MARTHA. Here, sir.

MR. N. (c.) Good. Now observe both of you: a gentleman named Fitz-Gullem will presently call—a good-looking, dashing individual; show him into this room, and treat him with the utmost deference.

MARTHA. (L. c.) Yes, sir—certainly, sir.

BEN. (L.) We'll be sure to treat him with indifference, sir.

MR. N. Deference, booby! respect and—

BEN. Ah, that's what I've always been used to; 'cause, you see, brother Bill and me—

MARTHA. Go along, stupid!

Goes off, L. door, pushing BENJAMIN before her—SERAPHINA and WILHELMINA advance, R.—SIMON comes down, L.

MR. N. Now, ladies, that you are fortified with a good breakfast, I will tell you that, which if revealed to you while fasting might perhaps have harrowed up your vitals.

SERAPH. Oh! I am all agitation!

MR. N. Last night, returning towards home about half-past ten o'clock, and making my way down an obscure street to shorten my road, I suddenly came upon a spectacle which almost froze me with horror.

WILHEL. (R. c.) You terrify me, uncle! what was it?

MR. N. Two little boys fighting—*extremely* little boys.

SERAPH. It was indeed a horrid spectacle.

SIMON. A pair of spectacles you mean, ma'am.

MR. N. My natural feeling of humanity urged me on, and I broke through the crowd, and rushed to separate the juvenile combatants. I felt like a lion—was blind to all danger; when suddenly my hat was knocked over my eyes, my coat nearly torn from my back, and my watch snatched from my fob.

WILHEL. Oh, uncle!

SIMON. Yes, miss, (*sighing*) unelo has got it before this, no doubt.

MR. N. At that moment a voice exclaimed, "Here comes a crusher!"

SERAPH. } A crusher!
WILHEL. }

SIMON. A what-er?

MR. N. Crusher, I discovered, is the vulgar title for policeman.

OMNES. Oh!

MR. N. I had just extended my jaws to vociferate murder, when another voice near me exclaimed, "Shut up old fellow, 'ere's your ticker—I have taken it from the rascal;" A

gentleman of imposing appearance thrust my watch into my hand and was hurrying away, but I followed and held him fast. I begged to know his name. "Fitz-Gullem," he said; I gave him my card—"A. Noodle, 95, Spooney Street."—expressed my eternal obligations, and received from him a solemn promise that he would this morning call upon me.

SIMON. And you really believe that he will come. (*aside*) He's the softest old chap I ever did see.

MR. N. But, his noble courage could not save my property, for after shaking hands warmly with Mr. Fitz-Gullem, I walked quickly home, and on arriving, found I had no watch.

SIMON. Ah, that is, you found it was lost.

MR. N. Yes, no doubt I had been followed, and when I had no longer the protection of my generous friend, my watch was again stolen—never again to be restored to me.

SIMON. The rascals *watched* for you, ha, ha, ha. (*aside*) It's quite clear to me that Mr. Fitz-Gullem is a thief. He won't come here, or, if he should, I'll go at once and give notice to the police.

Exit C. D. to L.

MR. N. Ah, Willy, if you would only, to oblige me, fall in love with Mr. Fitz-Gullem, he is more worthy of you than Mr. Squib.

WILHEL. Uncle, really, you—

MR. N. (*crosses, R.*) Well, well, come this way both of you, because I—that is I—I—in short—come this way.

Exit R. door, followed by the LADIES.

Enter MARTHA, C. door from L., showing in WILLIAM WIGGLES.

WILL. My dear, you overwhelm me with politeness, you are really too polite—(*aside*) in fact, so d——d polite that I can't make out what she is up to.

MARTHA. (R. C.) I was ordered by my master to pay you every attention (*curtseying*) he said you would come this morning.

WILL. Did he though? (*aside*) and how the devil should he know that. (*looking about*) Where's Ben, I wonder?

MARTHA. You need not tell me your name, for I at once recognized you from what master said—a tall handsome man.

WILL. Yes, certainly, that is exactly my description—(*aside*) Ben has been giving it to his governor, I suppose.

MARTHA. So I'll run and let Mr. Noodle know that **you** are here.

WILL. No, no, there's no occasion for that; he might be angry.

MARTHA. Angry! why, bless you, sir, he is dying to see you.

WILL. Is he! (*aside*) Ben must have been coming it strong, as usual, about me; (*aloud*) but, in the first place, my dear, just tell—

MARTHA. Yes, sir, I'll tell him directly. (*runs off R. door*)

WILL. Tell him—*him* is old Noodle, I suppose. What

deuce has Ben been up to? I wrote to say that I should call and see him to-day, and no doubt he has been telling his governor, as he does everybody, that his brother Bill is a most wonderful fellow; but even the truth, we know, should not at all times be spoken.

Enter MARTHA, R. door.

MARTHA. Here is master, sir.

Exit, L. door.

MR. NOODLE *rushes on, R. door, and embraces WILLIAM.*

MR. N. My dear sir—my brave preserver—welcome! a thousand times welcome!

WILL. (L. C., *aside*) Says I'm welcome. He makes himself very free, I think.

MR. N. I should scarcely have known you again; you look so different to—to—in short, you look different.

WILL. (*aside*) Says I look different. What *is* he up to?

MR. N. But to be sure it was night, and the great coat you wore, and the wrapper which almost concealed your face—But never mind that; permit me again to thank you.

WILL. (*aside*) What for, I wonder? for wearing a great coat and a wrapper, I suppose—not that I ever do wear a wrapper.

MR. N. Would you believe it—when I returned home last night, my watch had gone, and no doubt for ever.

WILL. Was it, really? Well, it must be a capital watch that would go for ever.

MR. N. Ha, ha, ha!—good!—I—really—I—in short, it's—it's good! You saved me last night from robbery and maltreatment.

WILL. The devil I did!

MR. N. Of course. Surely you know I am the individual that—you cannot doubt my identity.

WILL. Your identity? certainly not. (*aside*) 'Tis my own that I am rather dubious about.

MR. N. I gave you my card, and am, I assure you, A. Noodle.

WILL. Oh, you're a noodle!—'pon my soul, I believe you.

MR. N. You may. A. short for Archibald—A. Noodle; a man who has the means and would be delighted to be of service to you: so speak, my dear Mr. Fitz-Gullem, and—

WILL. What!—who!

MR. N. Come, come; a true hero is, I know, always modest; but—are you a single man? My niece has a snug fortune; you shall marry her.

WILL. Thank you, A. Noodle.

MR. N. Yet perhaps—And there's my sister, she is rich; if you like you shall marry her.

WILL. (*aside*) That's two! He's trying to lead me into a quiet case of bigamy.

MR. N. Or there's our domestic, Martha; a relation left her *ome* property awhile ago, and, if you choose, you shall marry her.

WILL. (*aside*) That's three! This old fellow must be one of the Mormons—mistakes me for somebody else; but I must explain, and—

MR. N. Now, come along, and I'll introduce you to my sister and to my niece.

WILL. Sir, you really must excuse me, but—

MR. N. (*taking hold of him*) No I won't! Come along!

WILL. But I want to tell you that I am—

MR. N. I know you are—my brave and generous preserver! (*embracing him*)

WILL. (*angrily*) Be quiet! you are a noodle!

MR. N. A. Noodle—yes, I know I am. Come along. (*dragging him*)

WILL. A. Noodle, I tell you you are a noodle.

MR. NOODLE *drags WILLIAM off, R. door.*

Enter MARTHA and BENJAMIN, L. door.

MARTHA. Now, Mr. Ben—John—this won't do. Do you intend to keep on doing nothing?

BEN. Certainly, until I am tired of it, and then I shall go to bed.

MARTHA. (R. C.) Well, you have plenty of cool impudence!

BEN. (L. C.) Of course I have; I have been used to good society—I am a gentleman what has seen better days. You see, brother Bill and me—

MARTHA. Hold your tongue; for if your brother Bill is at all like you—

BEN. But he isn't—everybody says he is a great deal better looking—not that I could ever see that myself; certainly his is a different style of beauty, and he is a different sort of fellow altogether to me.

MARTHA. I should hope so.

BEN. He was always sharp, I wasn't—stuck to his learning, I didn't; so he got rewarded and I got walloped; and when the holidays came, he used to go home loaded with prizes and marks of good conduct, and I used to return covered with marks of the birch.

MARTHA. Don't be indelicate.

BEN. How do you mean. I said *covered*, didn't I? I didn't mention any particular part, did I?

MARTHA. Oh, no more refinement than a cow, or a whale.

BEN. A *wail*, bless you, I was all over wails. Then you see, poor old mother died, and left us some property. Then Bill says to me, "Ben," says he, "we've been brought up to nothing, what shall we do now?" Then I says, "What we've been brought up to, of course." So we started, and Bill led me into genteel society. "Stick to me," says he, "and I'll make your fortune." So I never left him till he had spent our money.

MARTHA. And now you have come to service?

BEN. Yes, me; but not brother Bill. He has got notions above that sort of thing, and is quite certain, somehow or other, to make his fortune yet; and if he does, I am all right, for he'll take good care of me.

MARTHA. In the meantime, how does he live?

BEN. First rate; he has made so many friends that he is able to choose his quarters.

MARTHA. But nobody invites you.

BEN. No, and that's what puzzles me; for wherever we went, people used to notice me a good deal more than they did Bill.

MARTHA. You make me quite curious to see this brother of yours.

BEN. Well, he'll be here to-day, and then you'll see a fine handsome fellow; but you'd never guess we was brothers.

MARTHA. Certainly not if he at all answers your description. He hasn't much sense though, or he would not have squandered all your money away. I shall never do so with mine.

BEN. Yours?

MARTHA. Yes; I have lately had a good bit of property left me.

BEN. Have you, really, Miss Martha Muggles?—hem, it's very odd I didn't observe it before, but you are an uncommon pretty girl.

MARTHA. I have been told so often.

BEN. (*aside*) Ah, I am always a day after the fair. (*aloud*) But, if you are a young lady of fortune, how is it you remain in service?

MARTHA. Because Mr. Noodle sheltered me when I was a poor destitute girl, whom nobody would own, and has been a father to me ever since.

BEN. Um, ah, perhaps he has——

MARTHA. Has what?

BEN. Been a father to you. Perhaps he was from the very first.

MARTHA. What! no, sir, my father was a——

BEN. Oh, if you know who he was, that settles it.

MARTHA. And I have promised Mr. Noodle never to leave him till I am married.

BEN. Not till you are married! Ah, well, that's odd; I promised him the same thing. 'Twould be droll if we should both leave together, wouldn't it?

MARTHA. What do you mean?

BEN. Why, you see, you are a unmarried spinster, and I am a single bachelor.

MARTHA. And so you may remain, for all I care.

BEN. Ah, you won't have me. Well, then, marry brother Bill, and that will be all the same; because, you see, brother

MARTHA. Go along, you fool.

Pushes him off, L. door

Enter WILLIAM, R. door.

WILL. I can't stand it. I shall be kicked out when Noodle discovers I am not his champion, Fitz-Gullem. And yet, after all, I do not mis-represent myself, 'tis he that mis-represents me, and will not give me a chance of explaining. He wanted to introduce me to his sister, and his niece, and then I ran away, and now shall run out of the house, and look out for another opportunity to see Ben.

NOODLE *runs on, R. door.*

MR. N. My dear Fitz-Gullem!

WILL. (*aside*) Oh, hang Fitz-Gullem.

MR. N. Why did you leave me so abruptly; my niece is, I assure you, a charming girl, though I am afraid her affections are beyond your reach. But my sister is delightfully affable, and——

WILL. Your sister! (*aside*) Oh, lord!

MR. N. And entirely disengaged.

WILL. I am sorry to hear it.

MR. N. Sorry! you mean glad—think what an opportunity for you. Seraphina is my junior—considerably.

WILL. Ah, indeed.

MR. N. Nearly three years.

WILL. Oh.

MR. N. And is, upon my honor, a charming creature.

WILL. *Is*, you mean, *was*, about fifty years ago.

MR. N. And has a fortune of ten thousand pounds.

WILL. Oh, then I agree with you, A. Noodle, she is a charming creature.

MR. N. (R. C.) So win her, my boy, and wear her.

WILL. (L. C.) Wear her. (*aside*) Well one comfort, she must soon wear out.

MR. N. She is hale and hearty, of the right material to last.

WILL. Warranted to wash well, eh—though a little frayed by time.

MR. N. Ha, ha, capital, it—is—in short, it's—it's capital.

WILL. (*aside*) 'Tis all the same to me now, so as there's money in the case——

MR. N. What say you, my dear Fitz-Gullem?

WILL. (*aside*) Oh lord, I had forgotten that I was Fitz-Gullem; well, it won't do to throw a good chance away, and as he insists upon it, I'll oblige him, and continue, until found out, the noble Fitz-Gullem.

MR. N. (*crossing, L.*) But first, I'll order some refreshment.

WILL. (R. *aside*) And perhaps Ben will bring it; and if he sees me here before I have explained matters to him, my little game will be ended before it begins.

MR. N. (*at L. door, calling*) John! John

WILL. (R., *aside*) John, then 'tis all right, and I shan't see Ben at present. (*aloud, advancing to c.*) Ah, yes, A. Noodle, refreshment by all means.

MR. N. (L. c.) John, dy'e hear, sir—John!

Enter BENJAMIN, L. door.

BEN. You mean Benjamin, you know, but never mind.

WILL. (*aside, staggering back to R.*) Ben, murder!

BEN. (*starting*) What, Bill! lord, old fellow, (*crosses to c.*) ain't I glad to see you. (*WILLIAM makes signs to him*) What are you winking about? have you got something in your eye? why don't you speak to me in your usual affectionate manner?

WILL. (*aside to BEN*) I'll break your infernal neck!

BEN. Ah, that's it, that's the way I like to hear you talk. (*to MR. NOODLE*) he's very fond of me, sir,—always exerting himself in my behalf; many a good whacking he has given me, I assure you.

MR. N. (*crossing, c.*) Why, what is the the fellow talking about?

WILL. (R. c.) Haven't the smallest idea.

BEN. (L. c.) Brother Bill's a rum chap, ain't he, sir?

MR. N. (c.) Blockhead! What do I know about your brother Bill?

BEN. Oh, you can't talk to him long without finding out what sort of stuff he is made of.

MR. N. Why, where should I talk to him?

BEN. Where! why here; what didn't you know, this is my brother Bill.

WILL. (R., *aside*) Confound him! but I won't be flurried.

MR. N. (c.) What *does* he mean?

WILL. That's a puzzler; I have only one observation to make, he smells remarkably strong of liquor.

MR. N. (*shrinking from BEN*) I perceive it, even at this distance; go away, fellow, you are drunk.

BEN. (L. c.) Nonsense! it ain't possible I should be swipecy, when you only allows small beer.

MR. N. (c.) And I insist that you instantly apologize to Mr. Fitz-Gullem.

BEN. Who's he? and what have I done to him?

MR. N. This, sir, is Mr. Fitz-Gullem.

BEN. Get out, it's Bill Wiggles, my brother Bill; you see, brother Bill and me—

WILL. (R.) A. Noodle, this fellow is becoming offensive. Who, and what is he, for I never saw him before in all my life?

BEN. What, Bill! do you disown me—your own lawfully begotten brother!—you don't mean it.

WILL. (E.) Go away! (*crosses to c.*) I don't know you—(*seizing and shaking him*)—I don't know you. (*releasing him*) to away, dy'e hear!

BEN. (L. C.) It's his werry shake—and after such evidence as that, you'd try to persuade me that you are not my brother.

WILL. (C.) Go, or I shall kick you.

BEN. Of course you will—that's the regular rotation: first you swears, next you shakes, and then you kicks! Don't disown me, Bill—think how fond we've always been of one another—think of brotherly love, and the many times you've punched my head;—and if I thought you was never to crack my skull any more, I should break my heart—I know I should.

(whimpering)

WILL. (aside) Poor Ben! but I'll make it up to him by-and-bye. (aloud) My dear A. Noodle, this fellow is not right—in fact, his head is all wrong. I understand such cases perfectly well, and, I assure you, that he is a dangerous maniac.

MR. N. (R. C.) Bless me, yes, so he is;—how he stares with his eyes—that is, he—he—in short, he stares!

BEN. (L. C., whimpering) Bill! won't you own me? Bill—(shouting)—Bill! (MR. NOODLE jumps back)

WILL. (C.) Don't be frightened, A. Noodle—I'll manage him.

MR. N. Don't drive him to violence—try the soothing system.

WILL. I will. (to BENJAMIN) You ugly, cross-grained, stupid ass—

BEN. (pleased) That's right! go on, Bill—he's a ownin' on me now.

WILL. I know nothing about you—never before saw, or heard of you.

BEN. Oh, I must be out of my senses!

WILL. Of course you are. You see he owns that he is mad.

MR. N. Yes, yes; poor fellow—poor fellow!

WILL. And now, unhappy lunatic, begone! Never again presume to claim me as your brother, or terrible will be the consequence.

BEN. I see how it is—now you have spent all my money, you are ashamed of me; won't know me, 'cause I'm a flunkey! You're a upstart, Bill—you always was! When we was only little 'uns, you always used to crow over me—we never played at ring-taw, that you didn't smug all my marlows—and whenever I bought anything nice, you used to eat it—and I says it once more again, you're a upstart! (crossing quickly to C.) Mr. Noodle—(MR. NOODLE retreats to R. corner)—I'll explain the matter. (C.) You sees, brother Bill and me—

WILL. (L. corner) Get out—go and lie down!

BEN. (C.) I says it again, you're a upstart, Bill! and when you are alone by yourself, then, in your solitary moments, remember my solemn words—Billy, you're a upstart!

(stalks off, L. door)

WILL. Very mad, indeed! but don't be alarmed, A. Noodle he is not at present dangerous.

MR. N. (R. C.) I hope not—dear, dear, how horrible! Shall I order the carriage, and have him taken to Bedlam?

WILL. (L. C.) Not at present. (*aside*) Poor Ben! that would be coming it too strong. (*aloud*) Fear nothing, A. Noodle; though tolerably boisterous, he is perfectly harmless.

MR. N. Well, well, I rely on you; excuse me a moment, I must run to my sister, and—a mad footman—very disagreeable—it—it—in short, it's—it's disagreeable!

(*toddles off, R. door*)

Enter MARTHA, L. door.

MARTHA. Oh, sir, whatever have you been doing to Ben—John, I mean?

WILL. I have been doing nothing to Ben-John; but, unhappily, Ben-John is crazy!

MARTHA. (L. C.) If I didn't think so—for when I asked him what was the matter, "Go along," says he, "you're a upstart!" Poor fellow! and I was beginning to take quite a liking to him.

WILL. (R. C.) Were you real, . (*aside*) This is the affluent domestic, and uncommonly pretty, too!

MARTHA. What has driven him to his unhappy state?

WILL. He didn't state; but I have reason to believe that love, which, sometime or other, turns us all topsy-turvy—

MARTHA. La, sir, love has never turned me topsy-turvy.

WILL. Then you are lucky.

MARTHA. But who is he in love with?

WILL. Eh—why—hem—a female! When I say "female," I mean, a woman; and when I say "a woman," I mean, a lady—a lady high in the world—and as he dwells in the kitchen, of course she is beyond his reach.

MARTHA. Oh, dear!—and I really thought he was in love with me.

WILL. You are, then, anxious to be loved?

MARTHA. Yes—but for myself alone.

WILL. Exactly;—perish the wretch who would court you only for your money!—You have some property, I believe? (*she nods*) Ah! perish the wretch—Of course you wouldn't insist on your property being settled on yourself?

MARTHA. Certainly not, sir.

WILL. Quite right;—why should you fear to trust your money to one to whom you had confided that far more precious treasure—your heart?

MARTHA. My sentiment exactly.

WILL. And a noble sentiment it is. Sarah, I love you.

MARTHA. My name, sir, is Martha.

WILL. Of course, I know it is. Martha, I adore you.

MARTHA. La, sir! you are joking.

WILL. Joking!—no; serious—serious as a Methodist. Who

would be blind to such charms! Mine is no mercenary love; and were you worth forty thousand pounds instead of—hem—instead of—

MARTHA. Four hundred.

WILL. Instead of the sum aforesaid, my love would be all the same. (*aside*) Four hundred's devilish little though. (*aloud*) Do you think you can love me?

MARTHA. I don't know till I try.

WILL. And will you try?

MARTHA. Well, I'll think about it—I'll try to try.

WILL. And when shall we be married?

MARTHA. Gracious! we must love one another first.

WILL. And is it possible that you do not already love me? Can you have failed to appreciate this figure?—I'll not believe it: but do not doubt that you are dear to me—there are many reasons why I should adore you.

MARTHA. Many reasons?

WILL. (*aside*) Four hundred. (*aloud*) Yes, you are lovely, virtuous, and in want—

MARTHA. What?

WILL. Of a husband.

MARTHA. Oh, well, sir, I shall consider your proposal. If Ben had not lost his senses—though you are much better looking than Ben—

WILL. I flatter myself.

MARTHA. And you are a gentleman, and master's friend—and so I'll—I'll consider of it. (*aside*) And now I'll go and see if poor Ben is any better. *Exit, L. door.*

WILL. Number One is booked—and a devilish pretty girl Number One is. Four hundred pounds though—to sell myself for that!—sell!—pooh—'tis giving myself away.

Enter SERAPHINA NOODLE, R. door.

SERAPH. Brother—oh, I beg pardon—really—Mr. Fitz-Gullem, I believe.

WILL. (*starting*) Oh, pardon me! (*aside*) This is the dromedary, with ten thousand pounds on her back;—she's an awful guy, but—

SERAPH. Why do you start, sir?

WILL. Why?—Oh, rapture and raspberry jam!—such elegance!—such beauty! (*she simpers*)—I never saw anything like you in all my life—(*aside*) and, 'pon my word, I never did.

SERAPH. Oh, sir, don't—pray don't!

WILL. Make your mind easy, ma'am—I won't. Oh, you lovely creature of ten thousand pounds—charms, I mean!—your presence—oh, madam—I assure you, the sight of you quite upsets me; I feel in a state that, somehow—in fact, *feel, anyhow—in short, nohow; I feel as if I had loved*

many years—full ten thousand ; a heavy weight is on my heart—in fact, a ten thousand pound weight.

SERAPH. Oh, sir, may I believe—

WILL. Whatever you think proper, my ancient angel.

SERAPH. Sir!

WILL. Angelic, I mean. Will you be mine?—don't speak, but come to my arms

SERAPH. (*sinking into his arms*) Oh, Mr. Fitz-Gullem!

WILL. Oh, Miss Noodle!

SERAPH. Really, the sensation of this moment—

WILL. Very delightful, no doubt; but yours is but one sensation, while I have ten thousand. Miss Noodle, one chaste salute to bind the bargain.

SERAPH. Oh, sir!

WILL. (*aside, having kissed her, and making a wry face*) Ugh, that's worth all the money; however, I have got her. Number Two is booked and Number One floored.

SERAPH. Oh, Mr. Fitz-Gullem, you will never suffer another to rival me in your love?

WILL. There's no knowing what may happen; but at present the odds are greatly in your favor—ten thousand to four hundred.

SERAPH. Oh, Mr. Fitz-Gullem, I'm yours for ever.

WILL. (*aside*) Her for ever can't last long, that's one comfort. (*to her*) Your baptismal appellation is—

SERAPH. Seraphina—and yours—

WILL. William.

SERAPH. (*extending her arms*) William!

WILL. (*ditto*) Seraphina! (*they embrace*)

Enter BENJAMIN, R. door, and starts—they see him.

BEN. (*L. C.*) Bill, you're a upstart, and you're a swindler. Not content with doing me out of my young woman, you wants to commit bigamy with the old 'un.

SERAPH. (*R.*) Mr. Fitz-Gullem, what does the fellow mean?

BEN. Fitz-Gullem!—Fitz-humbug.

WILL. He does'nt know what he means, he is mad—awfully mad!

Enter MR. NOODLE, R. door.

MR. N. Oh, dear. (*R. corner*) The lunatic here again!

WILL. (*C.*) Yes, A. Noodle, and in a fearful state—see how he foams at the mouth.

BEN. (*L. C.*) None of your jaw, Bill. Mr. Noodle, (*crossing to C.*—SERAPHINA and MR. NOODLE, *R.*—WILLIAM, *L.*) hasn't a man a right to claim his brother?

MR. N. (*R. corner*) Yes, yes, my good fellow. (*soothingly*) Your brother, of course—a natural—

BEN. (*C.*) No, not a natural brother, but a real legitimate

buffspring. Well, that's my brother—my brother Bill. Oh, you blackguard!

WILL. (L.) A. Noodle, have you such a thing as a straight waistcoat?

BEN. My waistcoat is straight enough, and I don't want any other.

WILL. You must have a very straight waistcoat, for your mind is remarkably crooked. If you wanted a brother, could you claim none but me, you ill-looking specimen of humanity?

BEN. What? (*starts violently*)—MR. NOODLE and SERAPHINA huddle together in R. corner) Bill, you're a upstart. Disown me, will you—very well, then I won't own you—you're not my brother Bill.

WILL. There, you hear, A. Noodle—a slight interval of reason.

MR. N. Yes, yes, poor fellow.

SERAPH. Oh, he so terrifies me; take him away and shave his head.

BEN. What should they do that for? If I was bald, you wouldn't lend me *your wig*. (*she screams*)

WILL. Be off, you villain, or I'll murder you.

BEN. Ah, do; complete your hinfamy. Kill your brother, and be hanged for infanticide.

MR. N. Oh, very mad—very mad, indeed.

BEN. I won't be trampled on no longer. I'll shew you I'm a man—a man, old Noodle! Bill—I says it again—you're a upstart. Marry that old judy there, if you like. (SERAPHINA screams) But Martha's my object; she's a nice gal; she's got some money. I'll marry her, and then—speak to me if you dare. One brother to disown t'other brother—but I won't have it!

WILL. Secure him!

BEN. Keep off! Bill, you're a upstart. Noodle, you're a ass. I'm afraid of nobody. I feels strong enough to knock the house down, and so, here goes.

Strides about, upsetting chairs and tables, throws sofa pillow at SERAPHINA, who screams and runs off, R. door—hammers NOODLE, who crawls under sofa—pitches into WILLIAM, who tries to seize him, then making his way to C. door, is met by SIMON—throws another pillow at his head, upsets him, and rushes off, C. door to L., followed by WILLIAM.

MARTHA runs on, L. door.

SIMON. (*on ground*) Murder—fire—thieves!

MARTHA. (C.) Oh! please, Mr. Noodle, don't kill poor Ben—John, I mean.

MR. N. (*crawling from under sofa*) The fellow is raving mad! a confirmed, horrible lunatic!

MARTHA. (R. C.) I don't think he is quite right; for 'ae as insists that Mr. Fitz-Gullem is his brother Bill.

MR. N. (L. C.) Unhappy wretch! But, Martha, put the room to rights.

MARTHA. (*looking about*) Oh, goodness!—he has turned the furniture upside down.

SIMON. (C., *at back, sitting on floor*) And put the live stock wrong end upwards. (*coming forward*, R. C.) But what was it that girl said about Mr. Fitz-Gullem?

MR. N. (C.) That was the brave and noble fellow you saw scampering after that wretched maniac.

SIMON. (R. C.) Was it. (*aside*) Curse his impudence! (*aloud*) And that new servant of yours—

MR. N. As I told you, mad, and claims Mr. Fitz-Gullem as his brother.

SIMON. Does he. (*aside*) Confederates, of course.

MARTHA. (L. C., *having arranged chairs, &c.*) There, that's better. And now I'll go and see if poor Ben is worse.

Exit, C. door.

MR. N. Simon, that maniac must be secured.

SIMON. Oh! I'll secure 'em both, never fear!

MR. N. Both! What do you mean?

SIMON. Oh, nothing—only—

MR. N. Get a very strong straight waistcoat for the madman, and then—

SIMON. I will—and bind him to a chair.

MR. N. You will need assistance.

SIMON. All right. (*aside*) And then I'll secure Mr. Fitz-Gullem.

Enter WILLIAM, C. door, down C.

WILL. I chased the poor lunatic all over the house, and lost him, until attracted by your sister's screams, I found that he had rushed into her bed room; and after shaking her violently, he seized her favourite tabby, and hurled it out of window—then again bolted down stairs and into the coal-hole, in which lively receptacle I have now secured him.

MR. N. (L.) You hear, Simon. By-the-bye, this is Mr. Fitz-Gullem. Mr. Fitz-Gullem—

WILL. (C.) That will do, A. Noodle. (*to SIMON*) I hope, sir, we shall become better acquainted.

SIMON. (R.) We shall, sir, you may rely on it—(*aside*)—and sooner than you expect, Mr. Fitz-Gullem. *Exit, C. door.*

MR. N. (L. C.) I have arranged that the madman will trouble us no more.

WILL. (C.) How do you mean?

MR. N. I will explain presently. I will now run and comfort poor Seraphina. (*crosses to R.*) A madman in the house, Mr. Fitz-Gullem, is not pleasant—it—it—in short, it's not pleasant.

Exit, R. door.

WILL. (C.) What has A. Noodle arranged to do with Ben wonder. I'll not have him ill-used. Poor Ben!—when

have firmly secured the elderly Miss Noodle and her ten thousand, I shall soon make it right with him.

Enter WILHELMINA, R. door.

WILHEL. What could mean that dreadful noise. (*seeing WILLIAM*) Good heavens!

WILL. (L. C., *starting*) Good gracious!—the lady that—

WILHEL. (R. C.) The gentleman that I saw at—

WILL. Mrs. Bounceabout's. (*going to her*) Oh, charming angel, who walked into my heart while dawdling through a polka—and do I behold you once again! You know I love you—you, and only you—never loved anybody but you—must have you, or I'll forthwith hang myself on a yew tree.

WILHEL. Will you? But certainly your having sought me out is a proof that—

WILL. Sought you—eh! yes, of course. (*aside*) She may as well believe so.

WILHEL. (R. C.) And for your *friend* to gain admittance to this house, in the assumed character of a servant, was really an admirable stratagem.

WILL. (L. C.) Friend!—eh!—ah, ah! (*aside*) That's Ben.

WILHEL. I recognised him at once.

WILL. (*surprised*) What! you know then who he really is?

WILHEL. Certainly.

WILL. Oh!

WILHEL. The eccentric gentleman that was with you on the evening that—

WILL. Ah yes—exactly. (*aside*) It's all right. (*taking her hand*) Ah! if I dared but hope—

Enter MR. NOODLE, R. door.

MR. N. I am afraid you mustn't; for I have long suspected that an attachment to—to—and I was right; for sister Serry has confessed to me that some insinuating scoundrel who was at Mrs. Bounceabout's last night—

WILHEL. (C.) Hush, uncle—hush!

WILL. (L. C., *jumping about*) Hurrah!—tol-de-rol!

MR. N. Good gracious!—is he too going crazy!

WILL. (*crossing, C.*) A Noodle, in me you behold that insinuating scoundrel! (*turning and embracing WILHELMINA*) and a happy scoundrel I am!

Enter SERAPHINA, R. door.

SERAPH. Mr. Fitz-Gullem, (*coming to R. C.*) what are you about? Do you forget, sir, that you are engaged to me?

WILL. (C.) Oh, lord! (*aside*) Will nobody oblige me, and strangle this old she-dragon?

WILHEL. (L. C.) What did you say, aunt?

MR. N. (R.) Aye, what did you say?

SERAPH. (R. C.) That Mr. Fitz-Gullem has offered me his hand.

WILHEL. Ah!

MR. N. Do you mean it?

SERAPH. Of course I do.

MR. N. And you accepted him?

WILL. (*aside*) Of course she did!

WILHEL. Oh, base, deceitful man!

WILL. I love but you! (SERAPHINA approaches him) No, no, not you—go away! (to WILHELMINA) But you—you—only you!

Enter MARTHA, L. door.

MARTHA. Me, you mean; you said you would marry me, and you must, or I'll bring an action of *crim. con.* against you.

SERAPH. (R. C.) Oh, wretch!

WILHEL. (L. C.) Oh, this is too much!

WILL. (C.) I should think it was—twice too much!

MR. N. (R.) Mr. Fitz-Gullem, this trifling with the feelings of my family—

WILL. I assure you, A. Noodle, my feelings are not trifling just now; but it's all your fault, you old Mormonite—you told me to do it, and now, by the living jingo, I have done it.

MR. N. But that I am so deeply indebted to you, sir, I—I should—I—in short, I—I should—leave my house at once, or—

WILL. Never, (*embracing WILHELMINA*) unless this angel—

MARTHA. (L. C.) Don't do that, sir—you belong to me.

SERAPH. (R. C.) No, hussey, to me.

WILL. (C., *still holding WILHELMINA*) Ladies, 'upon my honor, I am not worth contending for! Oh, here's a nice mess I am in!

MARTHA. (*seizing him*) I must have you, 'cause Ben's a maniac.

SERAPH. (*seizing him*) I cannot afford to part with you.

WILL. Poor soul! she feels it's her last chance. (*they pull him*) Ladies, (*still holding WILHELMINA*) don't lug my coat so; if it's only that you want, you may have it between you—or my waistcoat, or my—or any other portion of my toggery!

SIMON SQUIB appears at C. door with two POLICEMEN.

SERAPH. (R. C., *lugging him*) You are mine!

MARTHA. (L. C., *lugging him*) No, mine!

SIMON. (*down L. with POLICEMEN*) No, he belongs to these gentlemen!

WILL. (R. C.) The devil I do—what for?

MR. N. (R.) Simon, what do you mean? This is Mr. Fitz-Gullem.

SIMON. Alias Nobble—alias Flash Jemmy—alias a dozen other aliases—one of the most notorious swell-mobsmen in all London! Secure your prisoner.

(POLICEMEN walk quickly over to R. C., and arrest WILLIAM—the three WOMEN simultaneously scream and faint—MARTHA in SIMON'S arms, L. corner; SERAPHINA in MR. NOODLE'S, R. corner; and WILHELMINA in WILLIAM'S, R. C.)

Enter BENJAMIN, C. door, and down C.—his face black, a straight waistcoat on, and dragging a chair to which he is fastened.

BEN. (walking backwards and forwards) Look here!—here's a picture!—I say, (turning round and shouting) here's a picture!

WILL. (R. C.) And here's another—specimens of still life! But there's no further occasion now for mystery—so just clear this matter up for me, Ben, there's a good fellow.

BEN. (C.) Me! I don't know you, my good man—never saw you before in all my life!

WILL. Now, Ben—

BEN. Get out! you are mad—you ill-looking specimen of humanity!

WILL. Do tell 'em I'm your brother!

BEN. Oh, yes; this is brotherly love, ain't it?

WILL. Of course it is—but, (looking at WOMEN) what sort of love do you call this?

BEN. Bill, you're a upstart!

WILL. I wish you could persuade these ladies to become upstarts!

BEN. I said you'd come to the dogs, and now you see you have come to the bobbies.

WILL. No, the bobbies—curse 'em!—have come to me. (POLICEMAN passes behind to L. corner and whispers to SIMON)

MR. N. (R.) Sorry, my arms are dropping off!

SIMON. (L., to MARTHA) Young woman, wake up.

BEN. (C.) If you'd been content, like me, to work for your living—

WILL. (R. C.) Pooh! you know I never liked business.

BEN. At any rate, you've got your hands full now.

WOMEN. (starting suddenly up) Wretch!—monster!

WILL. Oh, if you are going on in that way, you had better go off again.

SIMON. Here's some mistake, it seems—this is not Fitz-Gullem, after all.

WILL. Certainly not.

MR. N. (R. corner) Not! (crosses to R. C.) Who then are you?

WILL. (C.) A young man who has had money and spent it, but who in future—

BEN. (L. of WILLIAM) Is anybody going to cut me open, and take me out of this thingamy?

WILL. Brother Ben!—for, observe, this is my brother—

MR. N. And not mad!

WILL. As sensible as I am.

BEN. That doesn't say much for my understanding.

WILL. Ben, you will see that all I have done has been for your good as well as for my own

BEN. I don't know whether you have benefitted yourself, but this straight thingammy ain't done me much good, I think; and I'm sure it ain't agreeable to drag this chair about arter me, like a dog with a tin kettle tied to his tail.

MR. N. (*to WILLIAM*) Well, well—my niece, it seems, loves you; so only prove yourself worthy, and I shall be able to procure you a lucrative situation under government: A. Noodle is not without interest—the Noodles have always had influence with ministers.

BEN. (*L. C.*) Yes, there's always lots of 'em what's got government appointments.

MR. N. (*crossing C. to BEN, politely, and bowing*) You are right, sir.

BEN. (*L. C., shouting*) Is anybody going to cut me open!

MR. NOODLE runs over to R. corner—**POLICEMEN** release

BEN, and taking chair, waistcoat, &c. go off, C. door.

WILL. (*C., to WILHELMINA who is on his R.*) My angel, I shall endeavour to render myself worthy of your love. (*crosses R. C. to SERAPHINA*) Miss Noodle—(*she passes him disdainfully and comes to C.—he follows her*) I am sorry for you, but—

BEN. (*L. of SERAPHINA*) Better luck next time, old gal.

SERAPH. (*C., to BEN*) Ugh! (*to WILLIAM*) I hate you. (*crosses to R. C. next to MR. NOODLE*)

WILL. (*C.*) Very glad to hear it.

SIMON. (*L. corner*) Nicely I'm served, Mr. Noodle! but I'll tell my father, see if I don't.

MR. N. (*R. corner*) I am sorry; but I—I—in short, I'm sorry; but—

SIMON. Pooh!—humbug! I mustn't go home single, or I shall be laughed at. (*to MARTHA*) This young woman, I dare say, wants a husband.

MARTHA. I'm going to have one—eh, Ben?

BEN. (*C. L. of WILLIAM*) Eh, Miss Muggles, I shan't forbid the banns. Bill, I believe in you again, for I am going to marry Martha, and she has got some property, and that *will* be for my good

MR. N. But I want to know—

WILL. Sorry for it, for you can have no further information at present—for I have something to say to those who are entirely in the secret: 'tis their favourable opinion we must solicit, for on their verdict depends the future prosperity of—

BEN. "Brother Bill and Me."

MR. N. SERAPH. WILHEL. WILLIAM. BEN. MARTHA. SIMON.
E. C. L.

Curtain.

M R S. W H I T E

A Farce,
IN ONE ACT.

BY
R. J. RAYMOND,

AUTHOR OF

*The Toodles; Paul the Brazier; Robert the Devil; Old Oak
Tree; Balance of Comfort; P.S.—Come to Dinner;
Cherry Bounce; Deuce is in Her; &c. &c.*

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH,
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SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
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122, NASSAU STREET.

MRS. WHITE.

First produced at the English Opera House, July, 1836.

Characters.

MAJOR PEPPER	...	...	...	{ Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. LEWIS.
FRANK BROWN	...	...	...	Mr. HEMMING.
PETER WHITE	...	...	...	Mr. OXBERRY.
WIDOW WHITE	...	...	...	Miss NOVELLO.
MRS. WHITE	...	...	...	Mrs. F. MATTHEWS.
KITTY CLOVER	...	...	...	{ Mrs. KEELEY. Miss SHAW.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—ONE HOUR.

Costumes.

MAJOR PEPPER.—Dark blue military frock coat, white trowsers, cap, and stick.

FRANK.—Modern.

PETER WHITE.—Brown short-tailed coat, white waistcoat, nankeen trowsers, short gaiters, small opera crush hat, and a white cravat tied with large bow.

WIDOW WHITE.—Plain white dress. *Second Dress:* Riding suit and whip.

MRS. WHITE.—White muslin dress over a pink petticoat, fashionable bonnet with two large feathers, green veil, boa, and very small parasol.

KITTY CLOVER.—Coloured chintz gown, white muslin apron, and white cap with coloured ribbon.

MRS. WHITE.

SCENE.—*Richmond Hill, with a bird's-eye view of the Thames, winding through the distant country. To the R. a small cottage. To the L. a villa or cottage ornée, projecting somewhat on the Stage, with a practicable door and casement. In the background to the L. a practicable sloping hill.*—Morning.

Enter FRANK BROWN and KITTY CLOVER, from the cottage, R.

FRANK. Nay, my dear Kitty, consider——

KITTY. I do consider—the *consequences*, Mr. Brown; and as my old master, Squire Bramble, of Tantivy Hall, Somersetshire, used to say to I—"Consequences, Kitty, should always be considered"—So I do think it would be very wrong of I to disturb *Mrs. White* so early, seeing that she be come down from Lunnun to Richmond for change of air, and has taken that pretty cottage opposite mine, on purpose that I should be near her. Besides *why* should I disturb her? you beain't a relation of hers. (*significantly*)

FRANK. 'Tis of the utmost consequence that I should speak with her immediately, and if you really love her, Kitty——

KITTY. Ah! that I do, dearly! Wern't we little girls together when my mother was housekeeper to her father, old Squire Bramble? and didn't I come up with her to Lunnun, after his death, and remain in her service till I got married, and settled here at Richmond, where I take in children to nurse, while my good man goes a farming; and sorry enough I were to leave her, for she led a sad life with the rich old man she were obligated by her father's will to marry, because the old gentlemen happened to be schoolfellows. I were to have nursed their first offspring, but were disappointed, for what with the gout, and the rheumatiz, and his friends' *jokes* at his 'spousing a wife young enough to be his granddaughter, the poor old gentleman died in the honeymoon?

FRANK. And thus was your charming mistress left a widow at nineteen; but not, I hope, with a distaste for matrimony.

KITTY. La! bless you, no, sir! she an't had experience enough yet! (*archly*) But as she be now free to choose for herself, she ought to have a husband of her own age——

MRS. WHITE.

FRANK. Capable of appreciating her virtues and talents.

KITTY. Kind.

FRANK. Affectionate.

KITTY. And complaisant, never saying *no*—

FRANK. Yes.

KITTY. When she says *yes*.

FRANK. No! in short, Kitty, a good husband.

KITTY. Which be as scarce to find—

FRANK. As a good wife, Kitty!

KITTY. No—more scarcer! I be bound to speak up for my sex, you know!

FRANK. Well then, Kitty, I know just such a one.

KITTY. (*quickly*) What, a good husband, sir?

FRANK. (*smiling*) Yes.

KITTY. La! do pray show him to I, sir—(*with great naivete*) I be so fond o' curiosities! (FRANK *laughs*) Where be he, sir?

FRANK. Near at hand.

KITTY. (*aside*) Yes, at my elbow, or I'm much mistaken! (*aloud*) And have I ever seen him, sir?

FRANK. Often.

KITTY. (*archly*) La! you don't say so, sir! Stay, now I think on't, he be *young*.

FRANK. About my own age.

KITTY. Tolerably good looking—

FRANK. (*arranging his cravat*) Ahem!

KITTY. And he comes to Richmond every day to my cottage, where he has hired a room for change of *air*, as he says—

FRANK. Exactly. (*smiling*)

KITTY. And his name be—Mr. Francis Brown, Esq., Ha! ha! you be found out and discovered, you see, sir. (*laughing*)

FRANK. Ha, ha! why Kitty, you're as shrewd as a Lord Mayor.

KITTY. Come, that be no great compliment neither! but I can see as far into a mill stone as my neighbours; so you may as well confide in I at once, sir.

FRANK. Well then, to be candid, Kitty, I do love the charming widow, and rejoice to add that our affection is reciprocal.

KITTY. *Reci-pro!* oh, I understand! she gives you as good as you bring—well, then, the way to church be as smooth as a rail-road.

FRANK. Sdeath, no! there's a plaguy stumbling block in the path, in the shape of a peppery old uncle of mine, on whom I am dependent, and who is a determined enemy to wedlock.

KITTY. Ah! those crusty old bachelors! As my master used to say, "an old bachelor is like"—

FRANK. On the contrary, he is a widower of three wives.

KITTY. *Three!* what a *Blue Beard*! Did he marry 'em for love or money, sir?

FRANK. For the latter, I imagine, from the miserable life he led with them.

KITTY. Serve him right, the old cormorant.

FRANK. You now perceive the necessity of my immediately seeing the widow; my uncle will arrive this very morning from Devonshire, and if I am not in town to receive him——

(*here the WIDOW is heard singing inside the cottage, L.*)

Hark! 'tis she!

KITTY. That be her sweet voice sure enough,—don't it make your heart beat, sir?

FRANK. Double quick time, Kitty!

Enter WIDOW WHITE from villa, L., singing from a sheet of Music which she carries. KITTY enters the cottage, L.

WIDOW. (*singing*) La! la! la! a very charming composition indeed! (*sees FRANK*) Bless me, you here already, Frank? Why you must have been "Up in the Morning early," as the old song says!

FRANK. In truth, Clarissa, I hav'nt slept all night.

WIDOW. A visit from "Queen Mab," vulgarly called the night mare, perhaps. (*laughingly*)

FRANK. Yes, in the shape of a respectable elderly gentleman!

WIDOW. Ha! I understand, your uncle! and is he become civilized, or as much averse to matrimony as ever.

FRANK. More than ever, if I may judge from his last letter, in which he threatens to cashier me, if I disobey him. (*emphatically*) But he shall find me as obstinate as himself.—Let him disinherit me—I'll marry you without a shilling in my pocket, upon my soul I will, Clarissa. (*she laughs*) No, no, I mean if you had not a shilling in the world.

WIDOW. I have already told you that, happy as I should be to be called your wife, I will not consent to purchase the title at the price of your uncle's displeasure; for despite his eccentricities, he has, you confess, been ever most kind to you.

FRANK. And you love me, Clarissa?

WIDOW. Can I give you a stronger proof of my attachment?

FRANK. Yes!

WIDOW. How?

FRANK. By allowing me to introduce you to him.

WIDOW. Wherefore, pry'thee?

FRANK. Let him but see and hear you.

WIDOW. (*smiling*) You pretend I should make a convert of him—Flatterer!

FRANK. Nay I'm certain of it. (*emphatically and rapidly*) I present you to him, he is struck by your beauty, and will consent to our union, and carry us down to his estate in Devonshire, where we shall live like "Love among Roses."

WIDOW. A very captivating extempore romance, indeed! you are for illustrating "Darby and Joan," I see! But 'twill be time enough to settle these matters when we are married—if we ever should be, ha! ha!

Enter KITTY from the villa, L.

KITTY. I've been helping Susan, ma'am, and breakfast be ready—I've laid it for two, ma'am.

WIDOW. (*smiling*) For two, Kitty—wherefore?

KITTY. (*archly*) Because you be so hospitable, ma'am, and as Mr. Brown has rode from Lunnun this morning, I thought as how—(*WIDOW laughs*)

FRANK. "Sweet Kitty Clover," your attention is praise-worthy. But no ceremony, Clarissa, I beg—I shall be perfectly satisfied with bachelor's fare!

WIDOW. (*laughing*) Oh! the bread and the cheese are quite at your disposal, but the *third* article can be purchased only at the price of your liberty.

FRANK. Secure my hand then, and make me your prisoner for life.

Exit with WIDOW, into villa, L.

KITTY. (*laughingly*) Bachelor's fare! bread and cheese and kisses! oh, my—(*looking after them*) Ah they'll make a comfortable couple—not like Mr. and Mrs. White, the parents of the baby I be nursing—They be always quarrelling about the brat. Mr. White be so proud of being a father, that he'd willingly proclaim it to all the world by beat of drum; while his wife wishes nobody to know she be married. By the bye, she be a name-sake of my dear young *missus*, the widow; but la! no more like her than Mr. Brown be like Mr. White. I expect the loving couple to-day from Lunnun to see their offspring. Heigho! I feel rather melancholic and musical this morning.

Song.—KITTY.

To the fields I carried my milking can,
All in a morning early,
And there I met with a smart young man,
Who vow'd he lov'd me dearly.
I made him a curtsey, he made me a bow,
He kissed me, and promised to marry, I vow!
I wish that young fellow was with me just now,
On a May day morning early!

I strive to forget him, but all in vain,
On a May day morning early!
And if I never should see him again,
'Twould break my heart, or nearly!

I can't bear the sight of a sheep or a cow !
 I want to get married, yet cannot tell how,
 I wish that young fellow was with me just now,
 On a May day morning early !

(*a horn is heard without*) That be the omnibus. (*ascends the stage and looks out, L.*) And there be Mr. and Mrs. White sure enough, crawling up the hill—I must run and put a clean cap on the baby. *Exit into cottage, R.*

PETER WHITE *appears, R. U. E. on the hill, carrying a child's drum, a wooden horse, a small bundle, and his wife's shawl, hanging over his shoulder.*

PETER. (*as he enters*) Isn't it hot!—I'm all over porous ! (*turns and speaks off*) Take it easy, my dear Clemmy—I'd have made the driver bowl us up the hill, but he appealed to my humanity for his *hosses'* sake ! and certainly fifteen inside, beside himself and the cad, is no joke in the dog days for the poor Hanimals.

Enter MRS. WHITE R. U. E. carrying a very small open parasol, and fanning herself with her handkerchief—she is dressed vulgarly fine, and speaks affectedly.

MRS. W. The saints be praised, we are up at last !

PETER. Yes, as Douglas says. (*throws himself into an attitude and declaims*)

"The hill they climb'd, and halting at its top,
 "Of more than mortal height, towering, they seem'd
 "An host *Hangelic* clad in burning *Harms*."

MRS. W. Again, Mr. White, after my strict conjunctions ! (*they descend*)

PETER. It's the force of habit, my love, I can't help now and then quoting certain passages which *solicited* such applause, when I was a *Hamateur Hacter* at the private theatre in Ranter Street.

MRS. W. (*laughing contemptuously*) Rubbage ! a tragedian with such a figure—ridiculous !

PETER. Why I must own my friends said it was better suited to low comedy, than high tragedy.

MRS. W. This force of habit as you call it, is constantly exposing you to ridicule—Remember your conduct in the omnibus to day, when you sat alongside o' that young woman.

PETER. I only tipped her a bit o' *Romeo* ! (*laughing*) Oh, ah ! when I seized hold of the elderly gentleman in the bob wig, exclaiming with *Wirginus*—"My child, my child ! give me back my child."—"I really couldn't help it my dear—"Twas a sudden burst of nature, for I was thinking of our dear little Hoffspring.

MRS. W. You may think of it as much as you please, Mr. White, but I'll trouble you not to proclaim our marriage to all the world. You know how much it concerns our interest to keep it a secret, especially from my old maiden aunt, who, averse to matrimony herself, promises to leave me all her property, provided I remain single.

PETER. Why, certainly, the *mopusses* is a consideration, for the sake of our *hinfantine heir*! By-the-bye, my dear, talking of relations, what is become of your cousin, Mr. Augustus Brown, the *Dandy Perfumer*, as he was called, who I never saw, but who I'm told used to visit you *anonymously*, during my absence, when I was a courting you?

MRS. W. (*sentimentally*) 'Tis long since I have beheld that interesting youth, whose flattering attentions and presents of *Eau de Cologne* excited your absurd jealousy! (*emphasising the word Cologne*).

PETER. Jealousy! ridiculous? what, after the advice I gave myself in *Iago*—(*declaims*) Beware of jealousy! It is the green eyed lobster which doth make the meat it feeds on." Ha! ha Jealous indeed, of a dandy perfumer—ridiculous—(*aside*) If I had caught him tho', I would have Hannihilated him.

MRS. W. Peter, do you love me? (*sentimentally leaning on his shoulder*)

PETER. (*tragically*) Love you, Clementina?—I should think so!

MRS. W. Promise me then to conceal our union—Will you, dear Peter? (*caressing him*)

PETER. Insinuating Clemmy—But how long, think you, shall I be obliged to *consolidate* in my bosom those parental feelings which are ready to burst forth whenever I think of our "*Hinfant bud of early beauty*," as the poet says?

MRS. W. Not long, Peter; my aunt is very old and very dropsical.

PETER. Well, then, I'll wait till she drops off!

MRS. W. Ah! (*sentimentally*) now you talk and look as when you came a courting me on Primrose Hill! Do you remember that happy time, Peter?

PETER. Do I?—Don't I!

Medley Duet.—PETER and MRS. WHITE.

Air—"The Guaracha."

PETER. Oh, remember the time when a courting I came,
In hopes your kind favour to catch;
I the spark was, dear Clemmy, and you were the flame,
And between us we lighted a match!

Air—"Voulez vous danser."

MRS. W. And don't you remember, Peter, the day,
When, smartly drest
All in our best,
We to church rode, joyous, gay,
To be wedded willing?

Same Air.

PETER. Yes, I remember well the day,
When, both inclin'd,
We fast were *jin'd*,
For I the parson a guinea did pay,
And the clerk a shilling!

BOTH. Then to Windsor, in a shay,
From the church we bowl'd away,
Dashing,
Splashing,
Cant'ring,
Bant'ring,
To spend the sweet bridal day.
Yes, I-remember, &c.

MRS. W. (*speaking*) And don't you remember, Peter, what a sweet honeymoon we passed at Greenwich, and how you used to take me to the Crystal Palace, and the theatres, and, above all, to the Opera—the charming Opera?

PETER. To improve ourselves in the *hexquisite* harts of singing and dancing, by listening to *Greasy* and *Mario*, and seeing *Taggilony* "trip it on the light fantastic toe." (*imitating*)

MRS. W. And then we used to practise at home, and try to imitate them.

PETER. And very well we did it for *Hamateurs*.

Air—"The Gavotte."

BOTH. Fal la la! how *Greasy* like we sing'd it—
Fal la la! how *Taglony* like we wing'd it—
One leg here, t'other leg there,
To be modest pray beware!
To obtain the meed of praise,
Attitude's the thing now-a-days.
(*they dance à la opera*)

Enter KITTY CLOVER from cottage, R.

KITTY. (*affecting surprise*) Well, I declare, if here ben't Mr. and Mrs. White!

PETER. Yes, here we are, nurse, loaded with toys, for our dear little Peter; not forgetting a lump of sugar and tea for you. (*gives them*) How is the dear little fellow?

KITTY. Oh, charming, sir; he cut his first tooth yesterday.

PETER. Bless his little gums. (*crosses C.*) That's half-a-crown for you, nurse. (*gives her money*)

KITTY. Oh, thank'ee, sir, I don't say it for the money's sake, but he's a perfect little *nudidity*. (*pocketing the money*)

PETER. Lovely bud of early beauty! (*delighted*)

KITTY. And you ought to be proud of him, sir.

PETER. I am proud of him, nurse, *very* proud.

KITTY. Such a sweet temper too: he hasn't cried once since—(*a CHILD heard crying within, R.*)

PETER. Eh! what's that?

KITTY. As sure as fate, now, my little niece has let him fall!

Exit to cottage, R.

PETER. Fall!

MRS. W. Stupid girl! the dear little fellow may be disfigured for life. (*hurries into cottage, R.*)

PETER. (*follows calling in a crying voice*) Peter! poor little Peter! (*rushes into cottage, R.*)

Enter FRANK BROWN from villa, L.

FRANK. (*walking to and fro*) All is delightfully arranged! Clarissa consents to see my uncle under an assumed name, and the meeting to appear accidental, as she wisely fears that a formal introduction as my intended, would fail to conquer his matrimonial prejudices. Now, then, to horse, and away to London to meet him. (*looking out, L.*) Ah! what do I see! by all that's vexatious, 'tis he himself! How the deuce did he ferret me out here!—no matter, I must have it out. (*buttons up his coat and walks towards L., singing, "Over the hills and far away."*)

Enter MAJOR PEPPER, L. U. E., meeting him face to face.

MAJOR. Halt! front! stand at ease!

FRANK. (*affecting astonishment*) Eh! can I believe my eyes? My dear uncle! (*embracing*) I was hastening to town to meet you. Who, in the name of wonder, informed you I was here?

MAJOR. Your puppy of a servant, at your chambers in the Temple.

FRANK. (*aside*) The rascal! after my strict injunctions—

MAJOR. At first he was as close as a sentinel with the watch word; but a sight of this real bamboo soon thawed his tongue. (*shows his cane*)

FRANK. (*affecting anger*) Stupid fellow! to make such a mystery of an innocent ride to Richmond. But I'm delighted

to see you, uncle, upon my honour I am ! (*taking his hand*) And how are you—but I need not ask. You look the very picture of health. (*with great vivacity*)

MAJOR. That's more than *you* do ; for you look as jaded as a soldier on a forced march. What the deuce ails you, eh ? you haven't been running into debt, have you ?

FRANK. No, uncle, I can't afford it. (*smiling*)

MAJOR. Not a scrape, eh ? an intrigue, you sly dog. (*laughing*) There's a woman in the question, I'll be sworn ! Eh ! I remember now—your last two sheets of foolscap-letter was filled with a description of a Widow Wiggins, or White, or some such name who had cast her magic spells around you. But that vertigo is over, I hope ; young people are mostly in love once a year from fifteen to thirty, when they generally come to their senses, as I hope you have.

FRANK. Indeed, uncle, I have not.

MAJOR. Eh ? what ! you don't mean to say you are seriously infatuated !

FRANK. Very seriously indeed, uncle !

MAJOR. What ! in spite of my counsel ! and my example ?

FRANK. I but *follow* it uncle ; and having had *three* wives yourself, 'tis very unreasonable in you to deny me *one* !

MAJOR. You may jest as you please, sir, but beware ! A man may game, intrigue, get over head and ears in debt—in short, run the entire round of folly, and yet redeem himself ; but he is never thoroughly and irreparably undone, till he is *married*—I say it, and *know* it—*Experientia docet*. (*with great emphasis knocking his cane on the ground*)

FRANK. (*with equal warmth, and declaiming à la Barrister*) And I say, gentlemen and ladies of the jury, in the present cause of Matrimony *versus* Celibacy ; that with all its little grievances, man knows no real happiness until he is married. Let him possess a wife of sense and virtue, and of whom he *himself* is *worthy*—(mark that point, uncle,) and he will feel a solid and permanent joy of which he was never before sensible. Uninterrupted happiness, indeed, no man can, or ought to expect. Life, unlike some *livings*, is no *sinecure* ; fruits do not now spring spontaneously from the earth, as they did in the garden ; nor does manna drop from the clouds as it did in the wilderness—but, despite the arguments of disappointed old maids and bachelors, in spite of *Malthus* and *Martineau* on *population* ; I assert that as a scheme of solid comfort, matrimony affords, to well regulated minds, a double share of delight in *prosperity*, and a solace and support in *adversity*. (*wiping his forehead with his handkerchief*) There, answer that, uncle, if you can. You can't—so huzza ! Matrimony wins the day, ha, ha !

MAJOR. Mad! mad as a March hare! fancies himself spouting in Westminster Hall. Love has turned his brain—zounds! I must take him down to Devonshire, or 'twill be all over with him!

FRANK. (*alarmed*) Eh! what? Devonshire, uncle?

MAJOR. Yes; where I hope the change of air, and a few shower baths, will effectually *cool* this plaguy love fever.

FRANK. 'Sdeath! what's to be done now? (*reflects*)

MAJOR. I did intend remaining a few days in town, but for your sake we'll be off by the mail train this very night.

FRANK. (*aside*) Egad, it shall be so; desperate cases require desperate measures!

MAJOR. So, quick march! Come along to town, and pack up your knapsack.

FRANK. (*sentimental tone*) Alas! uncle, it cannot, must not be!

MAJOR. Indeed! why not, pray?

FRANK. You are my uncle—my excellent uncle, and the ties of consanguinity are strong; but my duty to *another* is paramount o'er all. (*sentimentally*)

MAJOR. Another!

FRANK. Yes, my wife! (*turns aside his head with affected emotion*)

MAJOR. Your wife! why you don't mean to say you are married?

FRANK. I am indeed, uncle! (*rapidly and emphatically*) I know the full extent of my disobedience to your commands, but, hurried on by the impetuosity of youth, the violence of my passion, the—the—and despairing to obtain your consent—

MAJOR. You have made an ass of yourself! And who, pray, is Mrs. Brown?

FRANK. Mrs. White, who, for the present, however, retains her name, as she wishes, for family reasons, to keep our union a secret. (*placing his hand on the MAJOR's shoulder*) And I am assured you will bury it in the inmost recesses of your affectionate bosom. (*turns aside to laugh*)

MAJOR. Nonsense! I won't believe it. Come, come, master Frank, you are acting your part extremely well, but it won't do. We old soldiers are not so easily caught. You want to wheedle me out of my consent, but it won't do, I tell you, ha, ha!

FRANK. (*aside*) 'Sdeath! he suspects—

MAJOR. Ha, ha! I wonder you didn't work it up stronger, by swearing that a sweet little offspring had crowned your handy work. It would have been a very *natural* consequence, you know, ha, ha!

FRANK. (*aside*) Egad, and it shall be so. Alas! you now *touch upon a tender chord*. (*aloud*)

MAJOR. Tender fiddlestick! (FRANK sighs—MAJOR looks

alarmed) Eh? why—why, you don't mean to say you are really—
(*at this moment the CHILD is heard crying in the cottage, R.*)
Eh? what the devil's that? (FRANK *pretending to be deeply affected, points to the cottage, and places his hand upon his heart, exclaiming sentimentally*)

FRANK. Pardon me, uncle—but the *voice of nature*; my feelings are so overcome, that I must withdraw for a few moments. (*going—CHILD cries again*) Poor babe! (*half aside*) Cutting its little dog tooth! *Exit into L. house, laughing.*

MAJOR. If it should be all true! (*going to cottage, stops*) Oh, here comes a wench. She can tell something about the matter, perhaps.

Enter KITTY CLOVER, hastily, R.

KITTY. I wonder if Mr. Brown be gone yet. (*stops, seeing the MAJOR*)

MAJOR. So, so, she knows him. (*aside*) Hark'ee, young woman. (*aloud*) Didn't I hear a child crying just now?

KITTY. Mayhap you might. Some folks ears are *long enough* for anything.

MAJOR. Who does it belong to?

KITTY. Its father and mother, to be sure. (*aside*) What an inquisitive old gentleman.

MAJOR. And who are they?

KITTY. Can't tell.

MAJOR. How so?

KITTY. Because I mustn't.

MAJOR. Why not?

KITTY. Can you keep a secret? (*mysteriously*)

MAJOR. Yes. (*getting close to her*)

KITTY. So can I! (*laughs*) Ha, ha! you thought to pump I, because I be country bred. But la bless you, sir, there be as many fools in Lunnun as in the country, as *you* must know. (*going*)

MAJOR. But listen——

KITTY. I can't; there be Mrs. White calling I. (*runs into cottage, R.*)

MAJOR. Mrs. White! it's all true, then! that name confirms the melancholy fact. The hypocritical scoundrel! I'll disinherit, and leave him nothing but his wife, and if she proves like any one of the three late Mrs. Peppers, he'll be pretty well punished, I think. (*walks to and fro*)

Enter PETER WHITE, from cottage, R.

PETER. (*strutting about with his hands in his pockets*) What a dear little feller! nurse says he's the picture of me; ha, ha! lovely infant! happy father!

MAJOR. (*aside—behind*) What strutting bantam cock is this, I wonder? He came from the Cottage—one of Mrs. White's friends, I suppose.

PETER. (*in front, to himself*) We'll have him vaccinated next week, and christened on *my* birthday, the first of April: and ecod! a rare jollification we'll have of it. He's very fair though for a boy. I wish he was a little more *brown*; it looks manly!

MAJOR. (*advancing*) Eh? Brown! he knows Frank. (*meeting PETER face to face*) What's that you say, sir?

PETER. (*looking up at him*) Eh? say? why I suppose I am at liberty to speak of my dear little—godson? (*aside*) Ecod! I was near letting the cat out of the bag.

MAJOR. And are you god-father to the brat?

PETER. Brat! come I say, old gentleman! and what then, pray?

MAJOR. What then?—why you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

PETER. Ashamed of myself! for what?

MAJOR. Why, for aiding and abetting in such a disgraceful transaction!

PETER. Disgraceful! (*aside*) What does the old codger mean?

MAJOR. Aye. (*emphatically knocking his cane on the ground*) Do you know to whom the child belongs, sir?

PETER. I should think so.

MAJOR. Do you know it's father?

PETER. I suspect so. (*conceitedly*)

MAJOR. And so do I, sir.

PETER. Very likely! (*aside*) I don't remember his *physiology*, though.

MAJOR. And I repeat, sir, that is the offspring of a clandestine, unlawful union.

PETER. Unlawful!

MAJOR. Yes, sir, contracted without my knowledge or consent.

PETER. (*aside*) His consent! that's good anyhow.

MAJOR. In short, sir, 'tis my nephew's child.

PETER. (*laughing*) Your nephew's! ha, ha! a capital joke, faith! (*aside*) Some wag has been hoaxing the old gudgeon. (*aloud*) And who told you so, eh? ha, ha! (*laughing*)

MAJOR. My nephew himself, to be sure.

PETER. (*still laughing*) Your nephew himself, eh? ha, ha! *where and when*, pray?

MAJOR. Here.

PETER. Here?

MAJOR. On this very spot, not five minutes ago.

PETER. (*getting alarmed*) Eh! what?

MAJOR. So you see I know all about the clandestine marriage and Mrs. White.

PETER. (*more alarmed*) Mrs. White! (*aside*) A horrid thought flashes on my brain. (*aloud*) And your nephew's name is—

MAJOR. Brown.

PETER. (*startling*) Brown!

MAJOR. Pshaw! you know it as well as I do.

PETER. (*aside*) The dandy perfumer, by all that's horrific! This, then, accounts for the *smell* of Lavender water! (*reels against MAJOR PEPPER, who supports him*)

MAJOR. What does all this mean? (*shaking him*) Sir! Mr. What's your name?

PETER. (*aside—recovering*) My head turns round like a teetotum. (*tragically*) This, then, accounts for her agitation whenever his name was mentioned. But I'll have deep, dreadful, deadly reparation! Both—both *shall* feel a *him*jured husband's vengeance.

MAJOR. What the deuce ails him? is he mad?

PETER. (*rushing up to him*) Hark'ee, old gentleman, do you know what Othello says?

MAJOR. Not I.

PETER. (*clenching his hands at him*) "See that thou prov'st Mrs. White a—you know what—or thou hadst better have been born a dog, Iago—a dog—a dog—dog!" (*striding to and fro*)

MAJOR. Poor fellow! I suppose he's subject to these fits.

PETER. (*rushing towards the cottage*) Ha—she comes!

MAJOR. Who? Mrs. White?

PETER. (*wildly*) Yes, that's her, and I'm done—Brown—Brown—Brown! (*strikes his forehead and rushes out above, R. U. E.*)

MAJOR. Mad! mad as a Bedlamite!

Enter MRS. WHITE, from R. cottage.

MRS. W. (*calling after PETER*) Peter, Peter, where are you going? We shall be too late for the omnibus!

MAJOR. (*aside—in front, looking at her*) What, is this the woman Frank said was all loveliness and gentility? A pretty taste he has got. (*aloud, bluntly*) Hark'ee, madam!

MRS. W. (*astonished*) Sir!

MAJOR. You and I must have a little talk together before you go.

MRS. W. A little talk together. Really, sir, I haven't the pleasure to know you.

MAJOR. But I know *you*, madam, and I blush for you; fie, madam! a woman at your time of life!

MRS. W. At my time of life! what do you mean, sir? I don't understand you, sir?

MAJOR. Oh, you need not affect ignorance in this, or any other matter, madam. I know all!

MRS. W. What do you mean, sir? you speak parregorically!

MRS. WHITE.

MAJOR. Your clandestine marriage, ma'am!—and the little offspring, ma'am!

MRS. W. (*aside*) Oh, gracious goodness! is our secret discovered? (*aloud—agitated*) Marriage, sir? may I ask who your scandalous informer is?

MAJOR. Your husband himself, ma'am!

MRS. W. My husband! (*aside*) Peter shall smart for this. (*aloud*) Well, sir, and if *I am* married, what affair is it of yours, pray?

MAJOR. 'Sdeath, ma'am, I'm your husband's uncle.

MRS. W. His uncle! what, are you old Mr. Tittlebat, the fishmonger of *Brumagem*?

MAJOR. Fishmonger? fiddledee!

MRS. W. Really, sir, this language—

MAJOR. Zounds, madam, do you suppose I can take such a matter coolly? I'll disinherit the puppy, if it's only for the falsehoods he told me about you.

MRS. W. Falsehoods, Mr. Tittlebat?

MAJOR. Yes, he swore you were the *beau ideal* of loveliness and gentility.

MRS. W. (*conceitedly*) Well, sir, and am I not?

MAJOR. You certainly are *not*, madam! But 'tis not your fault. You are not accountable for the defects of nature and education!

MRS. W. (*fanning herself*) Oh, dear! I can't support it—I shall faint—I know I shall!

MAJOR. (*coolly, without looking at her*) You are at full liberty to act as you think proper, ma'am.

MRS. W. Oh, oh—I'm going—I'm going—

MAJOR. (*not looking*) Well, go, ma'am, go!

MRS. W. Oh! oh! (*sinks upon him, so that he is compelled to support her*)

MAJOR. 'Sdeath! (*aloud to her*) Ma'am! ma'am! can't you postpone it till you get in doors, ma'am?

At this moment PETER WHITE enters, R. U. E., his cravat loosened, and his whole appearance disordered. Perceiving his wife in the MAJOR'S arms, he appears horror-struck, strikes his forehead, and rushes out again, exclaiming "Brown! Brown!" L. U. E.

MRS. W. (*starting up suddenly from the MAJOR'S arms*) You're a brute! a monster! But expect my husband to avenge these insults, sir! *Hurries into cottage, R.*

MAJOR. What a Xantippe! a perfect Sycorax!

Enter FRANK BROWN, L.

FRANK. (*gaily*) Well, my dear uncle, I hope you are a little more calm now.

MAJOR. Calm! No, sir, I'm in a perfect hurricane of passion! Heark'ee, sir—do you persist in saying that Mrs. White is perfection personified?

FRANK. I do!

MAJOR. Then bless your taste, say I! I have seen her, sir.

FRANK. Seen her?

MAJOR. Yes, and the figure of fun, your child's godfather.

FRANK. My child's godfather! (*smothering a laugh*)

MAJOR. Yes, and the sooner you confine him in Bedlam the better.

FRANK. (*aside*) Egad, there must be some mistake here. (*aloud, suppressing his laughter*) So you have seen them, uncle—may I ask where?

MAJOR. Why, here, to be sure. They came from the nurse's cottage, little suspecting I was here to confound them—and I must say that your Mrs. White is—ahem!

FRANK. (*aside*) I see it all now—it must be the *other* Mrs. White and her husband. Egad, 'tis a rare joke; and if I can only persuade them to keep it up for a time—

MAJOR. So, sir, as you have thought proper thus to disobey me, you must take the consequences—I have done with you, sir.

FRANK. Nay, uncle—

MAJOR. (*walking to and fro in anger*) Not a word, sir—I have done with you for ever—for ever! (*the WIDOW appears at the door—she signs to FRANK and retires*)

FRANK. (*aside, moving towards cottage, R.*) Now for the tact of my dear widow to manage him. Meantime, I'll go and explain all to Kitty and the *other* Mrs. White, and try to gain their assistance. *Exit into cottage, R.*

MAJOR. (*walking to and fro in front*) What a dolt was I to leave Devonshire on such an errand, and in the very heart of the coursing season! (*stops on hearing the WIDOW sing inside the cottage*)

Enter WIDOW, from house, L.

Song. —WIDOW (*either heard within, or sung on the stage*).

Let others dwell in stately hall,
And feast 'neath golden canopy;
But let me dwell where torrents brawl,
And Zephyrs stir the greenwood tree.
Where the hunter's horn,
At peep of morn,
Comes echoing wild and merrily:
And the red deer bound
O'er the glebey ground,
And the mounting lark sings cheerily.
Tally ho! Tally ho!

MAJOR. (*delighted*) Tallyho! ho! Bravo—admirably sung—I could almost fancy myself coursing in Devonshire. I wonder who the fair singer is. A rare wench—one after my own heart!

WIDOW. (*singing*) Tallyho! (*pretending to know him*) Ha, Sir Guy Fox—come like a true cavalier to escort me to—(*here the MAJOR turns to her, and she affects surprise*) A stranger, I declare! a thousand pardons, my dear sir—(*curtseys*)

MAJOR. What a splendid creature! (*aloud, bowing*) Nay, listen to your song, which accords so well with my taste and madam, 'tis I, rather, who should apologize for stopping to habits.

WIDOW. You are a sportsman, then, I presume, sir.

MAJOR. Yes, madam, heart and soul—although a soldier by profession.

WIDOW. (*gaily*) Nay, the professions are somewhat alike—both carry arms, and are licensed to kill—although you, doubtless, think with me, sir, that shooting game is the more pardonable pastime.

MAJOR. Right, madam, right! (*aside*) Egad, she's as witty as she's beautiful. If that rascal Frank, now, had but chosen such a woman—

WIDOW. I, too, am enraptured with the sports of the field, and delight in the pleasures of the chase. 'Twas but last week I rode a day's sport after twenty couple of hounds—staunch Tartars as ever barked or run a course—took a flying leap across a stream—dashed through two quicksets, and leaped three five-barred gates!

MAJOR. (*pleased, and following her in action in her description*) Bravo!

WIDOW. We started Reynard before eight—had a view hollow by ten—tallyho, ho, ho!

MAJOR. (*delighted*) Tallyho! hark forward! wind him, the villain—wind him!

WIDOW. At eleven, he took to the water—we plunged after—crossed the Thames—

MAJOR. That's your sort, neck or nothing—yoicks!

WIDOW. Up the hill—down the valley—over hedge, ditch, and gate we go, helter skelter. At twelve the whole pack close in with him—you might cover them with a table cloth—

MAJOR. (*with action*) Beautiful—beautiful!

WIDOW. And we killed him exactly at nineteen minutes, three seconds after one.

MAJOR. Bravo, bravo! Why, madam, you're a perfect Diana!

WIDOW. Then at angling, I can kill a trout or salmon with a single hair—and at shooting, strike the spot out of an ace of diamonds.

MAJOR. (*delighted*) You don't say so, madam?

WIDOW. And at driving a phaeton—drive four hunters from

London to Bath without once losing the whip hand of the road, and turn them on the breadth of a shilling's edge!

MAJOR. Why, you're a perfect Olympic charioteer, madam—*(aside)* Zounds, with such a wife, a man might win a fortune in wagers!

WIDOW. *(aside, laughing)* Frank told me his humour, and I flatter myself I have hit it. *(to MAJOR)* And now, sir, may I ask, do you reside in this part of the country?

MAJOR. No, madam, my estate is in Devonshire, where I should now be enjoying the delightful sport you have so admirably described, but for a hair-brained nephew of mine, who has brought me up to London, where I find he has taken it into his silly head to get married.

WIDOW. Ah, I understand—a clandestine union.—*(aside)*—Frank did not tell me he had gone so far!

MAJOR. What think you, madam, of such conduct?

WIDOW. 'Tis highly censurable, no doubt; but love, you know, is a sad tempter to disobedience. *(sentimentally gazing at him)*

MAJOR. *(aside)* Oh lord, I can't stand it—zooks, what a pair of eyes! they're positively unnerving. *(aloud)* Now, had he selected one like yourself, madam, he would have had every excuse in his favour. *(bowing)*

WIDOW. *(curtseying)* Oh, sir, you—

MAJOR. Or had I been as fortunate with either of my three wives—

WIDOW. Three wives! what a bold man you must be!

MAJOR. Egad, so used my comrades to say—for in matrimony as in war, I always volunteered for the forlorn hope.

WIDOW. Ha, ha! *(looking out)* Bless me! a heavy shower of rain appears to be coming on—will you accept the shelter of my Hermitage until 'tis over? Although I am not quite sure I ought to trust myself with a gentleman who has had three wives. *(laughingly)*

MAJOR. *(briskly)* Egad, if I was fortunate enough to find a fourth like yourself, madam, I'd make a quartette of it to-morrow—I would, by Jupiter—ahem!

Exeunt into villa, L., the MAJOR handing her in courteously, à la militaire, singing, "When the heart of man is depressed by care," &c., during which FRANK and KITTY are seen peeping at them from the door of the cottage, R.—they come down.

FRANK. Bravo! the old sportman is fairly trapped at last!

KITTY. Yes, he be captivated, Mr. Brown, sure enough. No fools like old fools! *Exit into cottage, R.*

Enter PETER, L. U. E.

PETER. *(starting)* Ha! Brown, did she say? *(striding up to FRANK)* Is your name Brown, sir?

FRANK. It is, sir.

PETER. Then you're a willian!

FRANK. (*affecting anger*) Sir, that's a hard word!

PETER. Hard or soft, I repeat it. Fire and fury, sir, an't you afeard I should hannihilate you on the spot? (FRANK *smiles*) Mrs. White, sir—Mrs. White! (*stamping*)

FRANK. (*affecting anger*) And what have you to do with that lady, eh, sir?

PETER. (*lauging wildly*) Ha, ha, ha! hear this, ye gods! (*bitterly*) You love her, you know you do!

FRANK. (*following PETER, who retreats*) Dare you presume to question my right to love her? You're a rival, I suppose?

PETER. I should think I am!

FRANK. Pshaw! don't make a fool of yourself! (*turns from him and walks to and fro*)

PETER. (*following him about closely*) But, sir—

FRANK. Nonsense!

PETER. I am—

FRANK. Ridiculous! (*still walking*)

PETER. (*following*) I'll have satisfaction, sir—I say, satisfaction, sir—there's my card, sir! (*thrusts it over FRANK's shoulder—FRANK stops suddenly, takes PETER's card, places it on the palm of his hand, and blows it into PETER's face, exclaiming "Pho!"—PETER, bewildered*) The world's at an end, and chaos is come again! But I'll have vengeance—I'll raise the whole neighbourhood—all Europe shall know a *hinjured* husband's wrongs! (*ascends the stage, calling*) Hollo! everybody—murder—thieves—abduction—seduction—and *pretty* larceny!

Enter hastily MAJOR PEPPER, L., and KITTY, R.

MAJOR. Eh—what's the matter?

PETER. (*wildly*) Ha, ha! I have you both now. (*seizing the MAJOR by the collar with his left hand*) You are the old one what told me of it, (*seizing FRANK with the right hand*) and you are the young one what did it. (FRANK *laughs*, PETER *shaking him by the collar*)

MAJOR. What the deuce is the meaning—

PETER. (*calling*) What, ho! Mrs. White—Mrs. White—come forth, I say—

Enter the WIDOW, L., and MRS. WHITE, R., hastily.

WIDOW and MRS. W. (*together*) Here I am. (*short pause*)

PETER. (*releases the MAJOR and FRANK, and rushes towards his wife, then pauses suddenly, looks at her, and exclaims in a sentimental tone*) Oh, Clementina, have I deserved this of you? (*striking his forehead*)

MRS. W. Nay, my dear Peter—

PETER. (*averting his head*) Away! away! "Go to a nunnery go—go!"

MRS. WHITE.

MRS. W. 'Tis all a mistake, Peter, I assure you.

KITTY. It be, indeed, sir—come this way, and I'll tell you all about it. (*KITTY and MRS. WHITE endeavour to lead him away—he puts them aside and walks towards the back striking his forehead and gesticulating. They follow and appear to be explaining the affair to him.*)

MAJOR. (*to FRANK*) There, there, you may spare your pains, young gentleman, the widow has confessed all; and 'tis lucky for you that you have so fair an excuse for the deception you have practised on me.

FRANK. May I then hope to be forgiven?

WIDOW. Nay, that was our condition, Major, was it not? (*placing her hand upon his arm*) and a soldier's word is his bond.

MAJOR. Zooks! there is no resisting that bewitching smile. There, take her, Frank. If I had such a prize in view, I should certainly—

WIDOW. (*laughingly*) Complete the quartette of the Mrs. Peppers—eh, Major?

MAJOR. Ha, ha! Go to, you're a Syren.

WIDOW. A very widow, eh, Major? (*laughing, then looking towards PETER, &c.*) So it seems my namesake and her spouse are friends again. (*PETER, MRS. WHITE, and KITTY advance*)

PETER. (*laughing*) Ecod—'tis a comical mistake! But I was preciously frightened though! so, there are *two* Mrs. Whites—(*to FRANK*) and you are not the *Dandy Perfumer* after all.

FRANK. No, indeed, sir! But I have to apologize to your good lady for the liberty I took in making her my wife for an hour.

MRS. W. No apology, sir, I beg—'twas rather a compliment than a liberty! (*curtseying, then aside*) What a handsome fellow!

PETER. (*to FRANK*) Well, I never bear malice; so there's my hand; and what's more, I *invite* you to my son's christening.—Dear little fellow, you shall see him. (*runs into cottage, R.*)

MAJOR. (*delighted*) Frank, you're a lucky dog; and if you don't make such a wife happy, you deserve to be made the most miserable husband in Christendom.

FRANK. Trust me, uncle, I know the value of the treasure I am about to possess. (*at this moment PETER WHITE enters from the cottage, R., carrying in his arms a child in long clothes*)

PETER. (*coming down. L.*) Ladies and gentlemen, allow me the pleasure of introducing to you *Master Peter*, my son and heir, who will, with your permission, when able to spout, have the honour of making you a speech, and return you his respectful thanks for your kind reception of his *Pa* and *Ma*!

Curtain.

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Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0	Fra Diavola, burl., p v	20	0
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Bombastes, p. v.	7	6	Frankenstein, burl. 6 band parts ... 5 6		
Ditto, 6 band parts	5	0	Frederick the Great, opera, p v ... 4 0		
Bronze Horse, drama, p. v... ..	20	0	Ganem, vocal, 13 band parts	15	0
Brown and the Brahmins, burl. p. v. 15 0			Geraldine, p v... ..	10	0
Brother and Sister, opera, p. v. ... 5 0			Golden Fleece, song, "I'm still ... flutter," p v	1	0
Bottle Imp, drama, 1 & 2 violin, basso 3 0			Graziella, cantata, p v	10	0
Cabinet, opera, p v	3	0	Guy Mannering, drama, p v	10	0
Camaraizaman, extrav. p v	15	0	Ditto, 6 band parts	5	0
Camp, The, opera, p v	2	6	Happy Man, p v... ..	3	6
Cast King of Granada, extrav., p v 10 0			Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Castle Grim [Reece] comic op. p v 5 0			Hamlet, grave-digger's song and accom.	1	0
Castle of Andalusia, opera, p v ... 6 6			Hartford Bridge, opera, p v	2	6
Castle Spectre, opera, p v	2	6	Harvest Home, pastoral cantata p v 10 0		
Catastact of Ganges, dra, 6 band pts 16 0			Haunted Mill, p v	3	6
Charles XII, instrumental of song, "Rise, Gentle Moon"	3	6	Haunted Tower, comic opera, p v 5 0		
Children m the Wood, opera, p v... 2 6			Haunted Tower, opera, p v	2	6
Ching Chang Fon, burl. p v	10	0	He would be an Actor, full score ... 2 6		
Cinderella [Byron] burl. 8 band pts 15 0			Highland Lassie Ballet, 8 band pts. 3 0		
Cinderella [Byron] burl. p v	20	0	Highland Reel, opera, p v	2	6
Cinderella [Miss Keating] burl. p v 5 0			High Life below Stairs, song, "All in a Livery"	1	0
Cinderella, opera, p v	7	6	House that Jack Built, full score 10 0		
Clari, opera, p v	7	6	Ill-treated Trovatore, p v... ..	15	0
Comus, opera, p v	5	0	Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Court of Lyons, burl. p v	15	0	Illustrious Strauger, p. v.	5	6
Cricket on Hearth, dra. 10 bnd pts 5 0			Invincible, The, opera, p. v... ..	5	6
Critic, opera, p v	2	6	Ivanhoe, burl. p. v	15	0
Daughter of Danube, extrav. 4 band parts... ..	5	0	Ditto, 8 band parts	15	0
Dearer than Life, drama, 9 band pts 10 6			Ixion, p. v.	25	0
Deeds not Words, drama, 11 band parts... ..	7	6	Ditto, 9 band parts	25	0

s. d.	s. d.
Jack Sheppard (songs in).....	1 0
Jennette's Wedding, p. v.....	15 0
Joan of Arc, burl. p. v.....	15 0
Joan of Arc, drama, 4 band parts... 5 0	
Kenilworth, burl. p. v.....	20 0
King Alfred and the cakes, burl. p. v. 3 0	
Lady Godiva, vocal, and 13 band pts. 20 0	
Lady of Lyons, [Byron] burl. p. v.....	15 0
Ditto, 5 band parts.....	10 0
La Somnambula [Byron] burl.	15 0
Ditto, 6 band parts.....	10 0
Little Red Riding Hood, p. v.	7 6
Loan of a Lover, p. v.	5 0
Lock and Key, opera, p. v.....	2 6
Lodoiska, opera, p. v.	2 6
Lord Lovel, p. v.	7 6
Lost and Found.....	5 0
Love in a Village, p. v.....	5 0
Love in a Village, opera, p. v.....	8 6
Love's Limit, comic opera, p. v.....	7 6
Luke the Labourer, 6 band parts... 2 8	
Macbeth, tragedy, v. score & 8 b. pts. 19 0	
Macbeth Travestie, p. v.....	7 6
Ditto, 4 band parts.....	5 0
Madame Angot, p. v.....	5 0
Maid and Magpie, drama, p. score... 3 6	
Maid and Magpie, [Byron] burl. p. v. 20 0	
Ditto, 9 band parts.....	15 0
Maid of Mill, opera, p. v.....	5 0
Maids of the Mill, opera, p. v.....	2 6
Maid with Milking Pail (song).....	1 0
Manager Scrutt, 8 band parts.....	5 0
Mariner's Compass, drama, 11 b. p. 15 0	
Marriage by Lantern Light, p. v.....	5 0
Marriage Figaro, C'tess pt, with bass 5 0	
Mary Turner, p. v.....	10 0
Ditto, 12 band parts.....	15 0
Masaniello, burl. p. v.....	20 0
Masaniello, drama, 4 band parts... 3 6	
Masaniello, opera, p. v.....	10 0
Matrimony, opera, p. v.....	3 6
Mazeppa, burl. p. v.....	20 0
Ditto, 10 band parts.....	10 0
Medea, burl. full vocal score.....	10 0
Ditto, 8 band parts.....	10 0
Merchant of Venice (unpub. songs of) 2 0	
Midas, p. v.....	5 0
Mids, Night's Dream, [Bishop] p. v. 7 6	
Military Billy Taylor, p. v.....	15 0
Miller and Men, burl. p. v.....	10 0
Ditto, 9 band parts.....	10 0
Miller and Men, drama, 5 band parts 7 6	
Miller and his Men, opera, p. v.....	5 0
Miller Out-witted, 3 band parts... 2 6	
Minerali, 3 band parts.....	2 6
Mischief-Making, vocal & 12 b. pts 10 0	
Monsieur Jacques, p. v.....	5 0
Mother Goose, harl., orig., p. v.	5 0
Motto, burl. p. v.....	10 0
Motto, burl. 9 band parts.....	15 0
My Grandmother, opera, p. v.....	2 6
My Poll and my Partner Joe, burl. p. v. 15 0	
No, 4 band parts.....	2 6
No Song, no Supper, opera, p. v.	5 0
Nurseryrhyme, Fairy play, p. v.	5 0
Of Age to-morrow, opera.....	3 6
Orpheus and Eurydice, [Brough] p. v. 2 6	
Padlock, The, opera, p. v.....	3 6
Pas de Fascination, 8 band parts... 5 0	
Patient Penelope, p. v.....	10 0
Paul and Virginia, opera, p. v.....	3 6
Peeping Tom of Coventry, opera, p. v. 3 6	
Perdita, burl. p. v.....	20 0
Pet Dove [Gounod] com. op. full v. sc. 5 0	
Pirates, opera, p. v.....	5 0
Pizarro, p. v.....	3 0
Ditto, 4 band parts.....	2 0
Poor Soldier, opera, p. v.....	2 6
Prize, The, opera, p. v.....	2 6
Purse, The, opera.....	2 6
Puss in Boots, [Planche] full score 7 6	
Puss in Boots [Miss Keating] p. v. 5 0	
Quaker, p. v.....	5 0
Raymond and Agnes, 3 band parts 3 0	
Raymond and Agnes, opera, p. v.....	7 6
Rob Roy, p. v.....	5 0
Ditto, 9 band parts.....	5 0
Robin Hood, burl. p. v.....	15 0
Ditto, 9 band parts.....	15 0
Robinson Crusoe, p. v.....	5 0
Review, p. v.....	5 0
Robert Macaire, 4 band parts.....	2 6
Rosina, opera, p. v.....	3 6
Sentinel, p. v.....	5 0
Ditto, 14 band parts.....	15 0
Sleeping Beauty [Miss Keating] p. v. 5 0	
Signor Pantaloon, p. v.....	20 0
Swiss Swains, v. sc. opening chorus 5 0	
Sister's Sacrifice, 11 band parts... 15 0	
Sweethearts and Wives, p. v.....	5 0
Swiss Cottage, p. v.....	5 0
Ditto, 6 band parts.....	5 6
Slave, The, opera, p. v.....	5 0
Son-in-law, opera, p. v.....	3 6
St. David's Day, opera, p. v.....	3 6
Siege of Belgrade, opera, p. v.....	2 6
Shepherd of Cournoilles, p. v.....	3 6
Sardanapalus, tragedy, entire music 7 6	
Trombalcazar, p. v.....	7 6
Trooper's Horn, full score.....	7 6
Tell with a vengeance, p. v.....	7 6
Ditto, 10 band parts.....	7 6
Tale of Mystery, opera, p. v.....	3 0
Timour the Tartar, opera, p. v.....	4 6
Turnpike Gate, opera, p. v.....	3 6
Three and the Deuce, opera, p. v.	2 6
Vilkins and Dinah, p. v.....	7 6
Vampire, 4 band parts.....	5 0
Watch and Wait, drama, 8 bnd pts 7 6	
White Horse of Peppers, p. v.....	2 6
Ditto, 6 band parts.....	2 6
William Tell [Brough] p. v.....	2 6
White Cat [Keating] p. v.....	3 0
White Cat [Planche] full score... 5 0	
Whittington and Cat, 7 band parts 5 0	
Welsh Girl, overture, full score.... 2 6	
Willow Pattern Plate, 9 band parts 7 6	
Wallace, Hero of Scott'd, opera, p. v. 3 6	
Waterman, p. v.....	2 6
Who's the Heir, operetta, p. v.	4 0
Whistle the clock, opera bouffe, p. v. 7 6	
Wedding Day, opera, p. v.....	5 0
Widows Bewitched, operetta p. v. 10 0	
Windsor Cstl. [Burnand] op. burl. p. v. 2 6	
Yellow Dwarf [Miss Keating] p. v. 3 0	

A CHARMING PAIR.

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT,

BY

THOMAS J. WILLIAMS, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

Ici on parle Français, The Trials of Tompkins, Jack's Delight, The Silent System, An Ugly Customer, Nursey Chickweed, On and Off, A Race for a Widow, I've written to Brown, Peace and Quiet, Ruth Oakley, Gossip, Truth and Fiction, Cruel to be Kind, The Belle and the Boor, The Little Sentinel, &c. &c.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH;
PUBLISHER,
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SAMUEL FRENCH & SON.
PUBLISHERS,
122, NASSAU STREET.

A CHARMING PAIR.

*First Performed at the Royal Princess's Theatre,
(under the Management of Mr. G. Vining),
On Wednesday, May 27th, 1863.*

Characters.

MR. DOVETAIL SPLICER (<i>a Marrying Bachelor</i>).....	MR. R. ROXBY.
MAJOR BOANERGES BOUNCER (<i>late of the Bengal Tigers</i>).....	MR. FITZJAMES.
MR. LYCURGUS SMYTHE (<i>of Pump-court, Temple</i>).....	MR. BELMORE.
BOB (<i>his Servant</i>).....	MR. COCKRELL.
MISS SOPHONISBA SIMPERTON.....	MRS. H. MARSTON.
CLEMENTINA (<i>Bouncer's Wife</i>).....	MISS MARIAN JONES.
SUSAN (<i>Maid Servant</i>).....	MISS M. HENDERSON.

SCENE—*Bouncer Hall. Time—Present Day.*

Time of Representation—40 minutes.

Costumes.

SPLICER.—Fashionable morning suit.

SMYTHE.—Exaggerated "get up,"—light blue short coat, large-patterned plaid trowsers, white waistcoat, &c.

BOUNCER.—Dark blue tail coat (buttoned across), bright buttons, grey trowsers, &c.

BOB.—Footman's livery.

CLEMENTINA.—White muslin dress.

SOPHONISBA.—Coquettish "make up," indicative of an affectation of extreme juvenility.

A CHARMING PAIR!

SCENE.—*A tastefully-furnished Apartment in a Country House*
—Large old-fashioned window at back—two doors, R.
—two doors, L.—Table, with writing materials, L. C.—Arm
chair—Sofa—Pictures, &c., &c.

*Enter BOB and SUSAN, R.—BOB carries a portmanteau in one
hand, and a carpet bag in the other; over each arm he carries
railway rugs, &c.*

BOB. Well now, which is to be master's room?

SUSAN. (*pointing*) Through that door, and first to the left.

BOB. Well, I must have a rest before I goes any farther.
I really believe master mistakes me for a nigger—here's a
pretty lot of things I've had to carry from the station!

SUSAN. Ah! he's a rare hand at a visit, is Mr. Spicer.

BOB. Wisit! his wisits is visitations; (*altering his manner*)
but I say, Susan, are you as fond o' me as ever?

SUSAN. Lor, Mr. Bob, in course I am—when do we set up a
snug little business of our own, eh, Mr. Bob?

BOB. Don't talk o' settin' up. Master won't hear o' my
gettin' married!

SUSAN. Won't hear of it? Why, I thought he was so fond
of matrimony, that he's always making matches among his
friends.

BOB. Ah! his friends—that's another thing—he's so fond o'
marrying his friends, that he's determined to keep single
hisself, and expects me to keep so too! (*confidentially*) You
see, master's plan is this, as soon as he's knocked up a match,
he invites hissself to spend a month with the happy couple;
and he's got such a large connexion in the matrimonial line,
that his board and lodging don't cost him nothing, all the year
round—nor mine neither!

SUSAN. Lawk! Mr. Bob!

BOB. (*continuing*) And as for rent and taxes, why, he don't
know the wally o' the expression; he's like the gipsies—he
don't live noveres in partikler, but everyveres in general.

DOVE. (*heard speaking off*) Halloa! how's this—nobody at
home?

BOB. (*starting up*) Here he comes. I'd better take the things up at once. *Exit, L.*

SUSAN. (*calling*) Straight on, Mr. Bob, and first door to the left.

Enter MR. DOVETAIL SPLICER, R. 2. E.

DOVE. Ah! Betty, delighted to see me, of course you are? (*chucks her under the chin*)

SUSAN. Ha' done sir.

DOVE. But where are your respected master and fascinating mistress?

SUSAN. Master's gone out, and missus is a dressing, and so's Miss Sophonisba.

DOVE. What! dressing on my account? now really that's too bad.

SUSAN. La, bless you! it ain't on your account—there's a gent come from town, a Mr. Smith.

DOVE. Smith?

SUSAN. Yes, sir, Smith, with a y in it!

DOVE. (*reprovingly*) Smythe, my good girl, Smythe! There's a vast difference between "Smith" and "Smythe." (*puzzled*) Now how the deuce did Smythe get here?

SUSAN. Don't know how he got here, sir, (*looking off*) but here he comes. *Exit L. 2 E.*

DOVE. Eh! (*advancing to meet him*) Ah, Smythe, my dear fellow!

Enter SMYTHE, L. 2 E., tremendously got up, very exaggerated costume, Sydenham trousers, &c. &c.

How are you?

SMYTHE. What! Dovetail, my boy, this is punctuality.

DOVE. Punctuality! you don't mean to say you expected me?

SMYTHE. Yes, I wrote to you, at Podgers's.

DOVE. Haven't been at Podgers's! Podgers was gone to Paris, so I went straight on from Podgers's, to Todgers's. If Todgers's had been out, I should have started at once, for the Rodgers's; but how the deuce have you introduced yourself here, without my assistance?

SMYTHE. By the most fortunate coincidence; my friend Cognovit Browne, informs me that his friend Boanerges Bouncer, of Bouncer Hall, Bedfordshire, wishes to consult a lawyer on urgent business, and Browne being unable to go himself, offers me the job; so away I start with all the ardour of an aspiring barrister, eager to secure his first six and eightpence. I've been here just half an hour.

DOVE. But where's Bouncer?

SMYTHE. Gone to meet me at the station; we've crossed each other on the road.

DOVE. Well, he'll be back directly—the dinner hour's approaching! (*rubbing his hands*) But I say, now for the little matrimonial scheme, which is the real object of our mutual visit to Bouncer Hall. (*inspecting his costume*) I see you have got yourself up for the occasion.

SMYTHE. (*complacently*) Yes, three months' credit; what do you think of 'em? (*turning round and round*) That's about the style of thing, eh?

DOVE. (*critically*) Somewhat "loud" perhaps; but with me for confidential pilot, success is certain.

SMYTHE. (*anxiously*) You think so?

DOVE. Think so! I'm sure of it; match-making is my favourite occupation—my hobby—my mission! You know my theory: happiness in marriage depends upon a combination of contrasts; poor should mate with rich, dark with fair, stout with slim, fierce with gentle,—in short, it's the theory of hymeneal antagonism, or connubial contradiction—a system which under my skilful guidance, never fails to result in indissoluble concord, and perpetual harmony!

SMYTHE. (*admiringly*) Quite my notion! especially rich with poor! (*turns his pockets inside out*)

DOVE. (*reproachfully*) And yet, you'd have married that penniless little Bella Johnson, if I hadn't prevented you. Love in a cottage is all very fine when you've got the cottage! Why, my dear fellow, you could never have had a friend to dinner.

SMYTHE. (*ruefully*) I shouldn't have had any dinner at all!

DOVE. But fortunately I stepped in with my theory, to prevent so absurd a proceeding. No, my dear fellow, I've got a wife for you—a capital match—charming pair—five hundred a year, and a farm in Devonshire.

SMYTHE. (*joyfully*) Magnificent!

DOVE. (*complacently*) A trifle to what I sometimes do in matrimonial matters. I'm nothing short of a benefactor to society! (*triumphantly*) And so sign. I'm an object of positive adoration to the numerous couples whose happiness I have caused, they all esteem me, revere me, raffle for me—I spend a month with one, six weeks with the other. I fish here, shoot there—at this very moment, I'm booked for eleven months out of the twelve—and when you're married, I'll spend the odd month with you!

SMYTHE. (*energetically*) Month! (*grasps his hand*) Years, sir, a term of years!

DOVE. But I say, you must strike while the iron's hot. You had better see Miss Sophonisba at once.

SMYTHE. (*knowingly*) I have seen her.

DOVE. (*surprised*) You have?

SMYTHE. Yes, (*mysteriously*) I was just taking a turn round the garden, when I perceived a delightful young creature—

DOVE. (*stopping him*) I beg pardon, did you say a delightful young creature?

SMYTHE. Most decidedly.

DOVE. (*aside*) Well, there's no accounting for taste. (*aloud*) Go on.

SMYTHE. (*continuing*) A delightful young creature, clad in virgin white, seated book in hand, beneath a weeping willow. My heart immediately exclaimed "Tis she."

DOVE. (*surprised*) He's either very short-sighted, or entertains liberal notions on the score of juvenility, (*aloud*) Well, you threw yourself at her feet of course?

SMYTHE. No I didn't.

DOVE. At any rate, you burst into a torrent of passionate explanation?

SMYTHE. No, I never was much of a hand at a torrent, so before leaving Pump Court, I concocted a written declaration of my sentiments (*complacently*)—a glowing thing, sir, glowing—

DOVE. Well.

SMYTHE. Well, I cautiously stepped behind the willow, and while the lovely creature turned her graceful head aside, I slipped the glowing effusion into her book, and—vanished!

DOVE. (*aside reflecting*) Um, well, it may tickle the old girl's notion of the romantic—(*looking off*) Halloo! here she comes—now then I'll introduce you in due form—now mind how you play your cards—five hundred a year and a farm in Devonshire! You lucky dog, you.

SMYTHE. (*aside nervously*) Five hundred and a farm—I'm in such an awful twitter, I can't look at the lovely creature for the life of me. (*nervously pulls up his collar, arranges his hair, &c.*)

Enter MISS SOPHONISBA SIMPERTON, L. 2. E., her dress denotes an exaggerated assumption of extreme juvenility.

MISS S. (*simpering*) What, Mr. Splicer!

SMYTHE. (*aside*) What a dear little voice.

DOVE. (*who has meanwhile gallantly kissed MISS SIMPERTON'S hand*) Yes, my dear Miss Simperton, Mr. Splicer heartily at your service. (*aside to MISS S.—pointing to SMYTHE*)—the subject of our recent correspondence.

MISS S. (*starting affectedly*) Oh, my heart! (*looking at SMYTHE*) But you said he was handsome.

DOVE. (*evasively*) A—a—if not precisely handsome, he's young. He'll improve with time; his features will enlarge—develop—expand! (*aside to SMYTHE*) Now then, strike a

graceful attitude. (SMYTHE *makes a ludicrous attempt at the graceful—aloud*) Allow me, my dear madam, to present to you—(aside to SMYTHE) Eyes, modestly cast down—a little emotion—turn your toes out. (SMYTHE *ludicrously obeys each of these injunctions*) Allow me to present to you, my much esteemed friend, Lycurgus Smythe, of Pump Court, one of the future ornaments of the British Bar, whose agitation—(aside to SMYTHE) Sigh! (SMYTHE *sighs*) Louder! (SMYTHE *sighs violently*) Whose agitation is only equalled by his anxiety to become acquainted with the charming owner of so many divine perfections.

MISS S. (L., *in a flutter of delight*) Oh, Mr. Splicer!

DOVE. (C., *aside to SMYTHE*) Glance tenderly upwards!

SMYTHE. (R., *raising his eyes and beholding Miss S.*) Bless my soul! (*staggering back*)

DOVE. What's the matter?

SMYTHE. That isn't the one.

DOVE. (*hastily*) Oh, yes it is, though!

SMYTHE. (*pulling him by the coat tail*) But I tell you it isn't.

DOVE. (*hastily*) Allow me to know, will you?

MISS S. (*aside to DOVETAIL*) What does he say?

DOVE. (*to Miss S.*) He says he's fascinated—spell-bound.

MISS S. (*affectedly*) The effect I generally produce. Do you think I might with propriety venture to address him?

DOVE. (*approvingly*) By all means.

MISS S. (*simperingly*) Mr. Smythe!

SMYTHE. (*starting*) Eh!

MISS S. A—a—have you confided—a—a—the object of your visit to my niece, Clementina?

SMYTHE. Clementina! (*aside*) Who's Clementina?

MISS S. I saw you approach her just now, (*affectedly*) where yon weeping willow bends its tearful branches towards the crystal stream!

SMYTHE. Weeping willow! (*starting, aside to DOVETAIL*) I say, it's the weeping willow—I mean it's Clementina, I should prefer.

DOVE. (*to SMYTHE*) The devil it is—perhaps you are not aware that the weeping willow is Mrs. Bouncer.

SMYTHE. Mrs. Bouncer! (*aside, alarmed*) And I've served her with a written declaration.

DOVE. (*aloud, resuming*) As regards my friend Smythe's possessions, they are at present—inconsiderable, (SMYTHE *concealed by DOVE, again turns his pockets inside out*) but his future prospects are brilliant in the extreme, while as regards tastes, character, fortune, figure, never were striking contrasts so wonderfully calculated to blend and harmonize; believe me, you were made by nature for each other!

MISS S. (*languishingly*) I begin to think we were.

SMYTHE. (*aside*) If so, she was made rather too soon, that's all!

DOVE. (*to SMYTHE*) Now then, throw yourself on your knees.

SMYTHE. But I say, I've got on a new pair of Sydenhams!

DOVE. Never mind—

SMYTHE. (*doubtfully*) They're rather a tight fit, you know—a—there's seventeen and sixpence at stake. (*kneeling*)

MISS S. (*affectedly*) Rise, Mr. Smythe, rise, were we to be observed—rise, I entreat.

SMYTHE. (*rising*) That's lucky, *inexpressibly* lucky; another second would have done the business.

Enter MR. and MRS. BOUNCER, R. 2 E., quarrelling.

BOUNCER. I say it is.

MRS. B. I say it isn't.

BOUNC. I tell you, you did!

MRS. B. I tell you I didn't.

BOUNC. Mrs. Bouncer, you're an idiot!

MRS. B. Mr. Bouncer, you're out of your mind.

DOVE. Halloa! how's this? Ah, Bouncer, my boy, how are you? here I am you see.

BOUNC. (*stiffly*) Yes, I see you are. (*turns his back on him*) That infernal fellow again.

DOVE. (*turning to SMYTHE*) A—a—their usual serenity seems a little ruffled—a—a passing cloud. (*turning to MRS. BOUNCER*) Ah! charming Mrs. Bouncer, I needn't ask how you are!

MRS. B. (*stiffly*) I'm quite well, thank you, Mr. Splicer. (*turns away*) That meddling fellow come to stop again.

DOVE. (*surprised*) Mr. Splicer!—a—a—I see—the heat of the weather.

BOUNC. (*suddenly perceiving SMYTHE*) Halloa! who the devil are you?

SMYTHE. (*bowing, alarmed, and stammering*) Mr. Smythe—a—a—of Pump Court.

BOUNC. (*abruptly*) Ah! to be sure. Mr. Pump of Smythe Court. How are you, Pump?

SMYTHE. (*timidly*) Not Pump, sir,—Smythe!

BOUNC. Ah! precisely—we'll go into business after dinner. Mr. Pump Court, of Smythe—(*correcting himself*) I mean Mr. Court Smythe, of Pump—(*fiercely*) Why, what a devil of a name you've got. (*crosses to MRS. BOUNCER*)

SMYTHE. (*aside to DOVETAIL, looking at MRS. BOUNCER*) That's the weeping willow, sure enough, book and all. (*alarmed*) Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

BOUNC. (*approaching MRS. BOUNCER, who is pouting*) Don't

look so infernally black, madam! Do you wish the whole world to suspect our domestic disagreements?

MRS. B. I don't care what they suspect, Mr. Bouncer.

BOUNC. (*aside, fiercely*) Smile, madam. I command you to smile. (*aloud, and assuming a bland manner*) A—a—dearest love—how—a—a—how do you like the novel I brought you?

MRS. B. (*smiling convulsively*) A—a—most charming work. (*giving him book*) A—a—I haven't looked at the stupid trash. (*aloud*) You'll get me the second volume, dear.

BOUNC. (*aside, angrily*) Dear! call me ducky!

MRS. B. (*tragically*) Ducky! I'd die first!

DOVE. (*admiringly to SMYTHE, pointing to MR. and MRS. B.*) Touching specimen of conjugal harmony, a charming pair, they'd fetch the prize medal at a turtle-dove show.

SMYTHE. (*aside*) Turtle doves! roaring lions!

BOUNC. (*who has meanwhile, mechanically opened book perceiving Smythe's note*) Halloa, why what's this? a devilish suspicious three cornered epistle in my wife's book! a—a—I'll examine the contents when alone! (*stealthily puts it in his pocket*)

Enter SUSAN, L. U. E.

SUSAN. If you please, sir, dinner's ready.

DOVE. (*delighted*) Aha! dinner, joyful sound—delightful announcement.

MRS. B. (*to MR. B., who is shaking his fist at some imaginary individual*) Don't you hear, dinner's ready, my dear?

BOUNC. I know it is, love!

MRS. B. Then perhaps you'll lead the way, sweet!

BOUNC. (*grinding his teeth*) With pleasure, poppet. (*aside*) I burn to inspect that three-cornered epistle.

Exit into dining room, L. U. E.

DOVE. (*to MRS. B.*) Charming hostess! (*offering his arm*)

MRS. B. (*taking DOVE's arm, but looking after her husband*) I won't speak a word at dinner, and I'll faint the minute it's over.

Exeunt DOVE and MRS. B., L. U. E.

SMYTHE. (*to Miss S.*) Ahem! might I be permitted the felicity—

Miss S. (*languishingly*) He's very attentive. I—I—begin to think he'll do. (*looks round at SMYTHE, and sighs affectedly*) Heigho!

SMYTHE. (*glancing tenderly at Miss S.*) Heigho! (*aside as they go out*) Oh, isn't she getting fond of me, that's all?

Exeunt into dining room, L. U. E.—it begins to get dark, lights gradually down.

SUSAN. (*imitating*) Love, sweet, poppet! why, what's the matter with master and missus? Ah, it's all put on because Miss

Sophonisba's here; they don't like to quarrel before her, because they've an eye to her money. Holloa! it's getting dark, I'd better light the candles while they're at dinner. (*begins lighting candles in candelabra on table during the ensuing conversation with BOB*)

Enter BOB with an enormous stack of plates under his arm,

BOB. (*ruefully*) Here's a pretty treat! What's the use o' my commin' out' wisiting. I'm expected to help wait at table now. Master lends me out like a wolume o' the parlour library. I really believe he takes me for a nigger!

SUSAN. Then why don't you give notice, Mr. Bob, like a lad o' spirit.

BOB. Because, I arn't saved up enough to retire upon yet. But I won't stand it much longer, Susan. I'll give him a nint o' my matrimonial intentions, this werry night. (*at this moment a tremendous smashing of crockery is heard outside*)

BOB. (*alarmed*) What's that?

SUSAN. (*alarmed*) Lawk a-mussy, if it isn't master in one of his tantrums.

BOB. (*horribly alarmed*) Tantrums—a—a—I say, put me somewhere!

SUSAN. Quick, Mr. Bob, or we shall be spifflicated!

BOB. Well, this is a precious start.

Exeunt BOB and SUSAN, in alarm, R. 1 E. Renewed smashing of crockery heard outside.

Re-enter BOUNCER furiously, followed by DOVETAIL, L. U. E.

DOVE. Really, my dear sir, this behaviour is most extraordinary.

BOUNC. (*pushing away DOVETAIL*) Stand back! attempt not to stem the avalanche, to restrain the whirlwind—the volcano.

DOVE. But I'll appeal to any one, sir; you rise from table, and without any perceptible or obvious motive, you suddenly smash the soup tureen!

BOUNC. (*aside*) I smashed it, sir, because I thought proper, and if you don't mind, sir, (*seizing DOVETAIL*) why, damme, I'll smash you!

DOVE. But my dear sir—(*aside*) One might as well argue with an ignited powder magazine!

BOUNC. (*aside, clenching his fist*) A maudlin sentimental love letter—a three cornered declaration—and to Mrs. Bouncer!

DOVE. (*bewildered*) But after all, what's the matter?

BOUNC. (*fiercely*) The matter is, sir, that this state of things cannot continue!

Enter (during last words) MRS. BOUNCER, L. U. E.

MRS. B. No, sir, it certainly cannot.

BOUNC. (*stopping short*) And why the devil can't it, Madam?

MRS. B. Because sir, I—I—I'm—(*sobbing*)—too un—unhappy!

DOVE. (*starting*) Unhappy! you, the model couple!

BOUNC. (*sarcastically*) The model what? ha! ha!

MRS. B. We're nothing of the sort!

BOUNC. We're wretched!

MRS. B. Miserable!

DOVE. (*astounded*) But why, whose fault is it?

BOUNC. Whose fault is it? why yours!

DOVE. (*starting*) Mine!

BOUNC. It's you, who put it into our heads.

MRS. B. It's you who got up the match!

MR. and MRS. B. (*together violently*) It's all your fault.

DOVE. (*alarmed*) But, bless my soul, I—

BOUNC. Her temper's awful!

MRS. B. His aggravation's frightful!

BOUNC. If I say black—

MRS. B. (*interrupting*) He says white.

DOVE. Well, colour's a deceptive question, what does it matter?

BOUNC. Matter, sir! why every thing, just take an instance. I can't endure heat.

MRS. B. And I can't endure cold.

BOUNC. (*continuing*) Well sir, the hotter I am, the more coals my wife puts on!

MRS. B. He know's I'm chilly, and he will have the window open.

BOUNC. Because the chimney smokes.

MRS. B. And why? because you're always poking the fire!

BOUNC. (*sarcastically*) 'Pon my word, things are coming to a pretty pass, when a man mustn't poke his own fire!

DOVE. (*coaxingly*) Now—there—there—do you know, my dear friends, these little varieties of opinion are the best proof that nature intended you for each other. I'm a judge of these things, look at the scores of charming pairs I've brought about. There's the Brownsmiths—

BOUNC. Aha, the husband beats his wife.

DOVE. (*surprised*) Eh! well, there's the Macintoshes—

MRS. B. The wife beats her husband.

DOVE. Bless my soul! but come now, you'll admit that the Ringdoves—

BOUNC. They're in the Divorce Court. Sir Cresswell Cresswell will decide between them!

DOVE. (*astonished*) What, you astonish me! (*pulls out pocket-book*)

BOUNC. (*fiercely*) And do you know, sir, (*looking at his wife*) it strikes me very strongly, *we* shall soon be in the same predicament!

MRS. B. What sir! (*screaming*) Aha, I feel I'm going to faint! (*falls into a chair, L. C. and begins tapping with her feet*)

BOUNC. Faint away, madam; faint as much as you please. Halloo! bless my soul. (*looks off*) Here's aunt Simperton! coming. Don't faint, madam! I, your husband, command you not to faint!

DOVE. (*alarmed*) No! for goodness' sake, don't faint. (*aside*) By Jove, she'll inspire the old girl with an aversion to matrimony; that will never do! (*referring to pocket book*) I've four months unoccupied as it is!

Enter MISS SIMPERTON, L.

MISS S. (*affectedly*) I declare you've left me all alone with Mr. Smythe. How very embarrassing? a *tête-à-tête* with a youthful stranger is a most trying position for a young person like myself—so profiting by the entrance of the dessert—

DOVE. (*horried*) The dessert, my dear madam; why, I've had no dinner yet! (*hastily approaches door of dining room*)

MRS. B. (*with renewed tapping of feet*) My nerves! my nerves!

MISS S. (*perceiving MRS. BOUNCER*) What do I behold! Clementina fainting! Mr. Dovetail, help! a smelling bottle!

DOVE. A smelling bottle! (*hastily turning back*) I—I always carry one; inhale, my dear madam, inhale! (*aside*) How confoundedly provoking.

MISS S. (*affectedly*) Poor suffering creature! we must assist her into the garden.

DOVE. The garden by all means; the air will revive her. This way—accept my arm—permit me—allow me—(*aside*) They'll clear dinner away, and I'm positively sinking from sheer insufficiency of refreshment.

Exeunt DOVETAIL, MRS. BOUNCER, and MISS SIMPERTON, R.

BOUNC. (*alone*) Faint! ha! ha! she's no more faint than I am. She's only fainting to spite me! but some decisive step must be taken at once—something crushing—overwhelming! (*producing letter from his pocket, reading*) "Should fortune ever make thee mine." Come that's cool. "Signed, Lycurgus." Now who the devil's Lycurgus?

Re-enter SMYTHE with napkin round his neck, L. U. E.

SMYTHE. Well, they've peculiar notions on the subject of dinner in this family. Instead of saying grace, the master of the house gets up, smashes the dinner service, and then rushes

wildly from the table. Halloo! (*alarmed*) there he is. I—I don't feel altogether comfortable.

BOUNC. Yes, some terrific blow must instantly be struck! (*perceiving SMYTHE*) Aha! Mr. Pump Court, of Smythe! (*rushing at him*) the very man I want. Pump Court, I require your professional advice.

SMYTHE. (*aside, delighted*) It's all right. Six and eight-pence at last!

BOUNC. Pump Court, I've cause for suspicions.

SMYTHE. (*importantly*) Suspicions! very good things to have.

BOUNC. (*fiercely*) What, sir! I say, I've cause for suspicions of the most alarming description, respecting Mrs. Bouncer.

SMYTHE. (*surprised*) Eh!

BOUNC. Suspicions, do I say, sir? I've proofs, written proofs. What do you say to that, sir? (*holding SMYTHE's letter up to his eyes*)

SMYTHE. (*starting, aside*) The glowing effusion, by Jupiter!

BOUNC. I found that wretched doggrel in a book, which has just left her hand. Now then, sir, sit down at that table—we'll just draw up a statement of particulars.

SMYTHE. (*confused*) A—a—by all means. (*aside*) I'd give something to be in Pump Court at this moment. (*sits down at table*)

BOUNC. (*looking at letter sarcastically*) Ha! ha! Lycurgus!

SMYTHE. (*mechanically starting*) Eh!

BOUNC. The rascal's name's Lycurgus! (*sarcastically*) What a name!

SMYTHE. (*sitting down at table, l. c., again offended*) Well names are a matter of fancy, you know.

BOUNC. Some ass of a fellow, I've no doubt.

SMYTHE. (*offended*) I'm not so sure about that.

BOUNC. How should you know anything about the matter, sir? (*fiercely*) Go on writing, sir—"I, Boanerges Bouncer, of Bouncer Hall, Bedfordshire."

SMYTHE. (*writing*) "I, Boanerges Bouncer, of Bouncer Hall, Bedfordshire."

BOUNC. (*relapsing into a fury*) Lycurgus, indeed! (*stretching across table, and seizing SMYTHE by the hair of the head*) If ever I come across Lycurgus, I'll smash him, sir—I—I'll knock his head off—a—a—(*twisting SMYTHE's head round and round*)—I'll spin him round and round, like a teetotum!

SMYTHE. (*roaring*) I say, mind what you're about, sir; my hair's real you know!

BOUNC. (*struck by a sudden idea*) If I could only obtain a line of the fellow's writing—

SMYTHE. (*aside, horribly alarmed*) Murder! he'll recognise the hand! (*seizes inkstand, and upsets it over paper*)

BOUNC. Why, what the devil are you about, sir?

SMYTHE. (*confused*) A—a—you see I was just dotting my I's.

BOUNC. (*holding up paper, which is smothered in ink*) Is this the way you generally dot your I's, sir? Why, what sort of a Pump Court are you?

SMYTHE. (*awfully confused, stammering*) You see—I—I'm not exactly the thing, and so—a—a feeling rather out of sorts, I—I mistook my right hand for my left—a—and——

BOUNC. (*roaring*) Put your foot in it, precisely!

Re-enter DOVETAIL hastily, with a letter in his hand, R.

DOVE. I'm happy to announce that the tapping has abated. Ah! Lycurgus, my boy! (*crossing to C.*)

BOUNC. (*starting*) Lycurgus!

SMYTHE. (*aside*) I'm done for.

DOVE. I've just received your letter; they've sent it on from Podgers's.

BOUNC. (*seizing letter*) Have they? (*aside*) I'll clear up my suspicions.

DOVE. (*starting*) Why, what is the matter, now?

SMYTHE. (*to DOVETAIL, trembling in every limb*) It's all up with me now! he's got the effusion!

BOUNC. (*who meanwhile has been comparing the two letters*) As I live, the same handwriting. (*rushing up to SMYTHE, and seizing him by the collar*) Scoundrel!

SMYTHE. (*struggling*) I say! Halloo—help—police—murder—hi!

DOVE. (*alarmed*) My good sir, you're strangling a respectable barrister.

BOUNC. (*squaring up at SMYTHE*) You a respectable barrister, then here's damages for you. Come on!

SMYTHE. Here—help—murder!

DOVE. Really, my dear sir, this is most unpardonable behaviour, to one of the future ornaments of the British bar.

BOUNC. (*fighting*) I'll ornament him! .

Enter MRS. BOUNCER, R.

MRS. B. What fearful noise is this? Ah, my husband fighting! (*screams*) Ah!

BOUNC. (*leaving off fighting, and hurrying round*) Oh! it's you, is it, madam? Do you recognise that epistle, madam? (*gives letter*)

MRS. B. (*taking letter, surprised, reading*) "My dear Dovetail! who's your hatter?"

BOUNC. (*impatiently taking it back*) No! that's the wrong one.

DOVE. (*bawling*) If you'll only listen I'll explain.

BOUNC. (*roaring*) Silence, sir! now, madam, perhaps you recognize this letter? (*with withering sarcasm*) From Lycurgus, madam.

MRS. B. (*indignantly*) Lycurgus! I never heard of Lycurgus!

DOVE. (*bawling*) Of course, she hasn't; don't I tell you the letter was destined for somebody else.

BOUNC. Then who's the somebody else? (*fiercely*) Produce your somebody else.

Enter Miss SIMPERTON, R. 2 E.

DOVE. Aha! a timely arrival. Miss Simperton, for whom has this future ornament of the British bar introduced himself here? (*crosses to Miss SIMPERTON—pointing to SMYTHE, whose hair is rumpled, his cravat untied, and who altogether looks anything but "ornamental"*)

MISS S. (*affecting girlish shyness, and playing coyly with her dress*) He—he—he—I—I don't know whether I ought.

DOVE. (*tragically*) Speak! to prevent manslaughter! Speak!

MISS S. (*starting*) Heavens! then I will no longer conceal that the youthful barrister sought these sylvan shades for—
(*stops short*)

BOUNC. (*impatiently*) For whom, madam, for whom?

MISS S. (*languishingly*) For me!

BOUNC. (*to Miss SIMPERTON*) For you! why, what the devil do you want with a youthful barrister?

DOVE. Now, my dear Bouncer, don't you see that the gloomy effusion was addressed to her.

MISS S. (*surprised*) Effusion, sir! What effusion?

BOUNC. (*scornfully*) Effusion! Confusion! She knows nothing of the effusion!

DOVE. How should she: she never received the effusion!

SMYTHE. (*stammering*) Owing—a—a—to a slight mistake a—a—of the postmar's!

DOVE. Who accidentally dropped it into the wrong box.

BOUNC. (*bewildered*) The wrong box!

DOVE. (*correcting himself*) The wrong book, I mean! The book Mrs Bouncer was reading.

MRS. B. (*astonished*) The book I was reading! I've seen no effusion!

DOVE. Of course you haven't, but your husband has. (*to BOUNCER, impatiently*) Now do you understand?

BOUNC. (*utterly bewildered*) I'll be hanged if I do. You're trying to bamboozle me, but it won't do.

MISS S. (*to BOUNCER*) Hold! intemperate man! I—I confess (*mincingly*) the youthful Lycurgus is not indifferent to me.

BOUNC. (*roaring*) The devil he isn't! (*struck by a sudden idea*) By Jove, he's come after her money! a vile attempt to

defraud me of my lawful expectations. (*approaching SMYTHE*) I've no particular wish to alarm you, sir, but I'm going to pitch you out of window.

SMYTHE. (*running away, alarmed*) Keep off, sir—you've damaged a bran new suit; a—a—you shall hear from me, sir. (*getting round to R.*)

DOVE. (*aside to SMYTHE*) I say, you'll not give up a capital match in this ignominious manner?

SMYTHE. (*aside*) Not a bit of it. I'm going, (*mysteriously*) but I'm coming back again. (*hurriedly approaching* MISS SIMPERTON) Lovely creature, meet me here in an hour.

MISS S. (*longuishingly*) May I trust you, Lycurgus?

SMYTHE. Bewitching maiden, you may, you may. I'll brave all dangers for thy sweet sake.

BOUNC. (*to DOVETAIL*) What's that he's saying?

DOVE. (*retreating*) How should I know, sir? (*turns away, and addresses* MRS. BOUNCER, *who turns away from him*)

SMYTHE. (*plucking up a spirit*) I say, sir, that the British Bar has been outraged, and Pump Court insulted in my person. I'll bring an action, sir—assault and battery—fines—damages—incarceration—extermination.

BOUNC. (*furiously*) Get out of my house, sir! (*SMYTHE runs off in alarm R.*)

MISS S. (*aside*) A secret assignation! (*aside*) Poor young man, how devotedly he loves me; I'll pack up my things in case he should ask me to elope—how very romantic. (*as she passes* BOUNCER *in a tone of contempt*) Ugh! you tyrant!

Exit, L.

BOUNC. Tyrant! aha, now, *she's* offended, that won't do—I can't afford to offend her. (*coaxingly*) Mrs. Bouncer, my dear, go after her and appease her.

MRS. B. (*indignantly*) I, sir! How dare you speak to me? Address me again and, I'll have another attack immediately.

Exit, L.

BOUNC. By Jove! they're all leagued against me, it's a conspiracy—an infernal conspiracy! if I could only discover who's at the bottom of all this.

DOVE. (*coaxingly*) Now, really Bouncer, you must not behave in this outrageous manner. You can't be jealous of your own wife's aunt? Besides the fond couple were formed by nature for each other. I've exercised the greatest discrimination in the selection.

BOUNC. (*starting*) You have? (*springing at him*) Wretch!

DOVE. (*alarmed struggling*) Gently.

BOUNC. Not satisfied with marrying me, do you want to ruin me?

DOVE. (*struggling*) Ruin you?

BOUNC. Don't you see, villain, that whoever marries my wife's aunt, robs me of her property?

DOVE. But surely your wife's aunt may do as she pleases—she's of age, isn't she?

BOUNC. (*shaking his fist at him*) How dare you meddle with my family affairs—you pitiful intriguer?

DOVE. (*offended*) Intriguer to me, Dovetail Splicer!

BOUNC. (*choked with indignation*) Get out of my house, sir!

DOVE. What, sir?

BOUNC. Out with you, sir!

DOVE. (*buttoning up his coat*) Oho! that's it, is it? Oh, very well, I will get out. (*pulling out his gloves*) I'll depart this very instant!

BOUNC. The sooner the better!

DOVE. (*pulling on gloves*) I will, sir—I'll leave the house for ever—I bid you an eternal farewell, sir. You shall never see me again—I'll go—

BOUNC. (*furiously*) Go to the devil, sir. *Exit, L.*

DOVE. (*alone—indignantly*) This then is human gratitude—this is my return for all the benefits I have conferred on mankind in general, and the Bouncers in particular. (*pulling out his pocket book*) I'll blot their names at once from my calendar. By jove! there's half my year vacant, but no matter! Dovetail Splicer's pride is touched. Dovetail Splicer would sooner sleep in a barn—a sentry box—a rabbit hutch than endure such base ingratitude! (*paces to and fro indignantly*)

Enter BOB, R.

BOB. Please, sir, the portmanty is unpacked.

DOVE. Then pack it up again, and fetch a fly.

BOB. A fly at this time o'night—there ain't no such thing, sir.

DOVE. Then we'll walk.

BOB. (*aghast*) Walk, sir! Who's to carry the boxes?

DOVE. (*still pacing to and fro*) Why, you, of course!

BOB. (*aside*) Well, I begin to think I *must* be a nigger! (*sulkily*) Please, sir, here's a letter.

DOVE. (*impatiently opening it*) Bella Johnson—capital match—ten thousand left her by uncle. Ah! the old story—more marriages. I'll have nothing to do with them. Hymen, avaunt! The entire world may remain single—the human race may become extinct for what I care. (*crumples up letter, and puts it in his pocket*)

BOB. Please, sir, talking o' marriages, a heligible match has presented itself for me.

DOVE. (*furious*) Don't talk to me of matches; I'll no more of them; I renounce my mission—break my staff. A wife! (*bitterly*) Ha, ha! When I marry, you shall!

BOB. But please, sir——

DOVE. (*angrily*) Not another word; follow me instantly!

BOB. (*alarmed*) But, sir, it's pitch dark—(*tremendous down-pour of rain heard*) and it's a' pouring o' rain!

DOVE. I don't care what it's doing. The consciousness of my wrongs renders me insensible to external influences. (*tragically*) Ungrateful Bouncers—after all I have done for them; it's enough to curdle the milk of human kindness, and sour the philanthropy of a thousand Quakers!

Jams his hat on tightly, and exit, R.

BOB. (*angrily*) It's enough to hexasperate the meekest of man-servants, and drive a nigger into hopen insurrection!

Jams hat on head in imitation of his master, and exit furiously, R.

The window at back is thrown open, and SMYTHE pops his head in, C.

SMYTHE. Aha! Nobody here—all gone to bed—now's my time. How very kind of them to have a ladder handy; by Jove, how it's pouring. (*gets in at window, C.*) So, Mr. Bouncer, you threatened to throw me out o' window, did you? But I'll marry the spinster aunt in spite of you. I'll persuade the old girl to elope. I'm safe, anyhow. They'll say she ran away with me. Yes, that five hundred a year would suit me admirably—I've been six months in the legal profession, and haven't pocketed a single six and eightpence yet. Poor Bella Johnson, I was very fond of her; but I can't afford a wife without money. Hark! a step; my Sophonisba comes—no, she doesn't! (*alarmed*) By Jove, it's somebody coming up the ladder. I'll blow out the lights. (*hastily blows out candles*)

DOVE. (*appears at top of ladder and looks in at window, C.*) This is pleasant; not a fly, not a donkey cart, not a perambulator to be had, and it's coming down in pails' full; doors all locked—everybody gone to bed—how very fortunate I came across this ladder! (*gets in at window, C.*)

SMYTHE. He's getting in at the window. A housebreaker, by Jupiter!

DOVE. (*taking his coat off*) I can stand everything but wet—wet I cannot stand, so I'll have forty winks on the sofa, and by to-morrow's dawn I'm off, before any one's the wiser. Ungrateful Bouncer!

SMYTHE. (*alarmed*) A—I don't feel altogether comfortable.

DOVE. (*approaching sofa*) Like all experienced travellers, I always carry my nightcap in my pocket. (*puts on a long white cotton nightcap, tassel of which sticks bolt upright*)

SMYTHE. (*aside*) By jove! the burglar's putting on his nightcap.

DOVE. (*laying hold of table*) Ah! the table cover! 'twill

serve as a counterpane. I'll wrap myself up in it and seek what repose my wrongs will allow me. (*wraps himself round in table cover and gropes his way back to sofa, on which he lays down drowsily*) I shall discard my theory of hymeneal antagonism and start a new one. I'll begin with Bella Johnson.

SMYTHE. Bella Johnson! Why, hang me if it isn't Dovetail!

DOVE. (*yawning*) To think now that Bella should have come in for a cool ten thousand!

SMYTHE. (*starting*) Ten thousand! Bella Johnson, I never loved but thee.

DOVE. (*sleepily*) That numskull Smythe would never have suited Bella.

SMYTHE. (*pricking up his ears*) Eh!

DOVE. He'll just do for the spinster aunt. (*falling asleep*) The romantic Sophonisba. (*snores*)

SMYTHE. (*offended*) Oh, he will—will he; we'll see about that, my friend—catch me marrying any Sophonisbas after this! (*door opens light*) By Jove, here she comes; she must not find me here, or she'll marry me by main force. Ah! a cupboard. (*steps into cupboard, R.*)

Enter MISS SOPHONISBA, with candle, L., she has on a hat and feather, and travelling suit.

MISS S. (*mincingly*) I fear the step I'm taking is a most inconsiderate one, but the youthful Lycurgus is so devotedly attached to me—he might destroy himself. I've put on travelling costume in case he should wish to run away with me. How very romantic this is! (*DOVETAIL snores*) Hist, methinks I hear his elastic footfall! (*DOVETAIL snores still more loudly, MISS SOPHONISBA starting*) What's that? (*turns round and perceives DOVETAIL—alarmed*) A strange fantastic figure on the sofa! (*screams*) Ah, ah!

DOVE. (*starting up and throwing table cover round him like a mantle*) Halloo! bless my soul, where am I?

MISS S. (*in an agony of fear*) Heavens! a phantom! the house is haunted! help! (*screaming*)

DOVE. Miss Sophonisba, hush, for goodness sake—

MISS S. (*recognizing him*) Mr. Splicer, and in this strange attire. Leave the apartment, sir, I command, I insist. (*covers her eyes with handkerchief*)

DOVE. (*alarmed*) Hush, my dear madam, I don't want them to know I'm here.

MISS S. I dare say you don't, sir. Leave the apartment instantly or I'll scream. (*screams*) Ah!

DOVE. (*terribly alarmed*) Well, for goodness' sake wait a moment—allow me time to get out of window. I shall bathe the whole house down upon me! Confound her ridiculous

affectation. (*putting one leg out of window*) Now, where the deuce is the ladder?

BOUNC. (*outside window roaring*) Oh, my head, oh!

DOVE. By Jove, there's somebody coming up the ladder. (*hastily re-enters window*) Where the devil shall I get to? (*rushes in great hurry to cupboard, R., which SMYTHE is holding on the inside—pulling violently, SMYTHE pulls the other way*) Halloo! somebody's holding the door inside. (*rushes hastily across stage to door L., which he opens exclaiming*) Ah, I'll conceal myself here! *Exit into room, L. U. E.*

MISS S. (*horried, screaming*) No, don't, that's my room, sir; an individual of the opposite sex in my apartment—I'm lost! (*falls fainting on sofa*)

BOUNC. (*appearing at window and rubbing his head*) Now, who the devil gave me that kick o' the head?

Enter MRS. BOUNCER, with candle, at door L. 2. E.

MRS. B. Why, dear me! I certainly heard aunt Simperton's voice in this direction. (*perceiving her husband looking in at the window—screaming*) Ah! what's that?

BOUNC. (*gruffly*) What's that? Why, it's me, madam. I was going my nocturnal rounds, when I perceive a ladder! I cautiously mount a few steps, when suddenly I receive a violent kick on the head!

MRS. B. (*astounded*) A kick?

BOUNC. (*rubbing his head*) A kick, madam; now kicks of the head don't fly about alone—a kick involves a foot, a foot suggests a leg, and a leg pre-supposes an owner! (*in a voice of thunder*) It's the owner I demand!

MISS S. (*on sofa, languidly*) Distracting situation!

MR. & MRS. B. (*together, perceiving MISS SIMPERTON*) Aunt Simperton!

MISS S. Question me not, I entreat—I implore!

BOUNC. Aha! I see it all, that barefaced young pettifogger—he's been here again—you ought to know better, madam, at your time of life!

MISS S. (*overcome*) At my—what sir?—insulting observation! (*falls back into chair*)

BOUNC. And as to Mr. Pump Smythe of Court—I—I'll make short work of him.

MISS S. & MRS. B. (*together, screaming*) Ah! there'll be murder!

BOUNC. His life, madam! (*to MISS SIMPERTON*) Retire to your chamber, I say.

MISS S. (*tragically throwing herself in the way in burlesque distraction*) Impossible!

BOUNC. (*astounded*) What! I do believe he's there! (*rushes to Miss SIMPERTON's room*) I'll do for him at once!

MISS S. No, no. (*tragically*) How very horrible; but how very romantic!

Re-enter BOUNCER, *dragging forth* DOVETAIL *by the collar in his shirt sleeves and a night cap*, L. 2 E.

BOUNC. (*not perceiving his mistake*) Wretched specimen of a bad six and eight-pence, I've got you, have I?

DOVE. (*roaring*) I'm not six and eight-pence! mind what you're about!

ALL. Mr. Splicer!

DOVE. (*confused*) Y-e-e-s, I was just standing up out of the rain!

BOUNC. In a lady's apartment! pitiful subterfuge! (*advancing upon him*) The family honour of the Bouncers demands a sacrifice.

DOVE. (*alarmed*) Family fiddlesticks—there were no witnesses!

SMYTHE. (*rushing from closet*, L.) I beg your pardon, sir, I'm a witness.

ALL. Mr. Smythe!

BOUNC. How the devil did you get here?

SMYTHE. No matter, sir, I know all.

BOUNC. (*furious*) All, sir! (*crossing rapidly to DOVETAIL*) What does Pump Court mean by all, sir?

DOVE. (*distracted*) How the devil should I know?

SMYTHE. (*affecting a tone of grave reproach*) Splicer, I shouldn't have thought it of you!

MRS. B. I'm surprised at you, sir!

SMYTHE. I'm astounded at you!

BOUNC. Your conduct is infamous!

MRS. B. Unpardonable!

SMYTHE. Shameful!

DOVE. (*distracted*) I tell you it's nothing of the sort.

MISS S. (*tragically*) Agonizing situation—how frightfully romantic!

SMYTHE. (*struck by a sudden idea*) There's only one course left, he must marry her.

BOUNC. (*tragically*) He must, he shall make her Mrs. Splicer.

DOVE. (*aghast*) I marry her!

MISS S. (*aghast*) I marry him!

DOVE.
MISS S. } (*together*) Never!!

BOUNC. The family honour of the Bouncers demands it, *(aside)* She's determined to marry somebody!

DOVE. (*indignantly*) I tell you, sir, Dovetail Splicer is not going to be bullied into matrimony in this manner!

BOUNC. (*with calm ferocity*) Then, sir, if Dovetail Splicer will just step out, I'll send a bullet through him at once.

DOVE. (*bewildered*) Distracting choice of evils! (*aside*) Stop, she has £500 a year, and seems in wonderful preservation. (*hesitates*)

MISS S. (*aside*) He's by no means ill looking; it would be as well to make sure of somebody!

DOVE. (*tenderly*) Miss Simperton!

MISS S. (*coquettishly*) Mr. Splicer!

DOVE. (*still more tenderly*) Sophonisba!

MISS S. (*still more tenderly*) Dovetail—you really love me?

Dove, I've carefully concealed my affection for the last thirty years.

MISS S. (*gushingly*) Touching instance of enduring attachment—how intensely romantic!

SMYTHE. Nature made you for each other. Bless, you my children! You're a Charming Pair!

BOUNC. } (*emphatically*) A Charming Pair!

MRS. B. }

SMYTHE. I say, Splicer, when you're married, I'll spend six months with *you*.

BOUNC. } (*eagerly*) And so will we!

MRS. B. }

SMYTHE. } (*in chorus*) That we will! Dear Mr. Splicer!

BOUNC. }

MRS. B. }

DOVE. Ah! (*with comic despair*) My own system turned against me. Like all public benefactors, I'm a martyr to my own theory. (*to audience*) I say, they're all coming to stay with us. I hope *you* will not refuse to pay us a visit now and then. Nothing will be wanting to reconcile us to our union, provided you only consider us a Charming Pair!

DOVETAIL.

MRS. BOUNCER.

MISS SIMPERTON.

MAJOR BOUNCER.

SMYTHE.

R.

Curtain.

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE.

MUSIC OF BURLESQUES, OPERAS, AND DRAMAS TO LOAN.

NOTE.—Piano and vocal parts are marked p. v. The figures in columns denote the PRICE per MONTH.—DEPOSIT: TWO MONTHS' HIRE.

	s.	d.		s.
Acis and Galatea, burl. p. v.	10	6	Devil's Bridge, opera, p. v.	7
Agreeable Surprise, opera, p. v.	2	6	Dolly, comic opera, p. v.	15
Aladdin, opera	5	0	Ditto, 14 band parts	15
Aladdin, [Miss Keating] burl. p. v. 2	6		Don Caesar de Bazan, drama, p. v.	7
Aladdin, Byron, burl. p. v.	20	0	Don Juan, pant., 4 band parts	3
Ditto, 8 band parts	15	0	Dreamland, cantata, p. v.	10
Alcectis, burl. p. v.	10	6	Dianna, opera, p. v.	3
Ali Baba [Miss Keating] burl. p. v. 5	0		Duke's Motto, drama, 9 band parts	15
Ali Baba [Byron] burl. p. v.	20	0	Eddystone Elf, drama, 6 band parts	6
Ditto, 8 band parts	15	0	Ernani, burl., 9 band parts	10
All at C, p. v.	15	0	Esmeralda, burl., p. v.	5
Alonzo the Brave, burl. p. v.	20	0	Ditto, 10 band parts	15
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0	Exile, opera, p. v.	3
Ashere and Adolat, drama, 10 band			Fair Helen, opera, p. v.	7
parts	10	0	Fair Rosamond's Bower, burl., p. v. 10	
Atalanta, burl., 5 band parts	7	6	Fairyland, fairy play, p. v.	7
Bare-faced Imposters, farce, p. v.	5	0	False Alarms [Braham] opera, p. v. 2	
Beauty and Beast [Keating] p. v.	5	0	False Alarms [King] opera, p. v.	3
Beggars' Opera, vocal score	3	6	Fanchette, spereetta, p. v.	5
Black Beard, opera, p. v.	3	6	Farmer, opera, p. v.	3
Black Eyed Susan, drama, full score 5			Farmer, opera, p. v.	2
Black Eyed Susan, burl. p. v.	20	0	Father and Son, drama, 5 band pts 5	
Ditto, 9 band parts	20	0	Field of Cloth of Gold, burl., p. v. 20	
Blind Boy, opera, p. v.	3	6	Forest of Bondy, opera, p. v.	5
Blue Beard, drama, p. v.	5	0	Fortunio, extrav., 9 band parts	15
Blue Beard Repaired, p. v.	30	0	Forty Thieves, opera, p. v.	2
Blue Beard [Byron's] burl. p. v.	15	0	Fra Diavola, burl., p. v.	20
Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0	Ditto, 9 band parts	15
Blue Beard [Miss Keating] p. v.	6	0	Frankenstein, burl. 6 band parts	5
Bombastes, p. v.	7	6	Frederick the Great, opera, p. v.	4
Ditto, 6 band parts	5	0	Ganem, vocal, 13 band parts	15
Bronze Horse, drama, p. v.	20	0	Gent. in Bl'k, [Gilbert] mus. d., p. v. 15	
Brown and the Brahmins, burl. p. v. 15			Geraldine, p. v.	10
Brother and Sister, opera, p. v.	5	0	Golden Fleece, song, "I'm still ...	
Bottle Imp, drama, 1 & 2 violin, basso 3			"Shutter," p. v.	1
Cabinet, opera, p. v.	3	0	Graziella, cantata, p. v.	10
Comaralzaman, extrav. p. v.	15	0	Guy Mannering, drama, p. v.	10
Camp, The, opera, p. v.	2	6	Ditto, 6 band parts	5
Cast King of Granada, extrav., p. v. 10			Happy Man, p. v.	3
Castle Grim [Reece] comic op. p. v. 5			Ditto, 10 band parts	7
Castle of Andalusia, opera, p. v.	3	6	Hamlet, grave-digger's song and	
Castle Spectre, opera, p. v.	2	6	accom.	1
Cataract of Ganges, dra, 6 band pts 10			Hartford Bridge, opera, p. v.	2
Charles XII, instrumental of song,			Harvest Home, pastoral cantata p. v. 10	
"Rise, Gentle Moon"	3	6	Haunted Mill, p. v.	3
Children in the Wood, opera, p. v.	2	6	Haunted Tower, comic opera, p. v. 5	
Ching Chang Fon, burl. p. v.	10	0	Haunted Tower, opera, p. v.	2
Cinderella [Byron] burl. 8 band pts 15			He would be an Actor, full score .. 2	
Cinderella [Byron] burl. p. v.	20	0	Highland Lassie Ballet, 3 band pts. 3	
Cinderella [Miss Keating] burl. p. v. 5			Highland Reel, opera, p. v.	2
Cinderella, opera, p. v.	7	6	High Life below Stairs, song, "All	
Clari, opera, p. v.	7	6	in a Livery"	1
Comus, opera, p. v.	5	0	House that Jack Built, full score 10	
Court of Lyons, burl. p. v.	15	0	Ill-treated Trovatore, p. v.	15
Crickets on Heath, dra. 10 bnd pts 5			Ditto, 9 band parts	15
Critic, opera, p. v.	2	6	Illustrious Stranger, p. v.	5
Daughter of Danube, extrav. 4 band			Invincible, The, opera, p. v.	6
parts	5	0	Ivanhoe, burl. p. v.	15
Dearer than Life, drama, 9 band pts 10			Ditto, 8 band parts	
Deeds not Words, drama, 11 band			Ixion, p. v.	
parts	7	6	Ditto, 9 band parts	

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE.

	s.	d.		s.	d.
Shepherd (songs in).....	1	0	Pas de Fascination, 8 band parts	5	0
Sette's Wedding, p. v.	15	0	Patient Penelope, p. v.	10	0
John of Arc, burl. p. v.	15	0	Paul and Virginia, opera, p. v.	3	6
John of Arc, drama, 4 band parts	5	0	Peeping Tom of Coventry, opera, p. v.	3	6
Kenilworth, burl. p. v.	20	0	Perdita, burl. p. v.	20	0
King Alfred and the cakes, burl. p. v.	3	0	Pet Dove [Gounod] com. op. full v. sc.	5	0
Lady Godiva, vocal, and 13 band pts.	20	0	Pirates, opera, p. v.	5	0
Lady of Lyons, [Byron] burl. p. v.	15	0	Pizarro, p. v.	3	0
Ditto, 5 band parts	10	0	Ditto, 4 band parts	2	0
La Sonnambula [Byron] burl.	15	0	Red Soldier, opera, p. v.	2	6
Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0	Prize, The, opera, p. v.	2	6
Little Red Riding Hood, p. v.	7	6	Purse, The, opera	2	6
Loan of a Lover, p. v.	5	0	Puss in Boots, [Planche] full score	7	6
Lock and Key, opera, p. v.	2	6	Puss in Boots [Miss Keating] p. v.	5	0
Lodolska, opera, p. v.	2	6	Quaker, p. v.	5	0
Lord Lovel, p. v.	7	6	Raymond and Agnes, 3 band parts	3	0
Lost and Found	5	0	Raymond and Agnes, opera, p. v.	7	6
Love in a Village, p. v.	6	0	Rob Roy, p. v.	5	0
Love in a Village, opera, p. v.	3	6	Ditto, 9 band parts	5	0
Love's Limit, comic opera, p. v.	7	6	Robin Hood, burl. p. v.	15	0
Luke the Labourer, 6 band parts	2	6	Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
Macbeth, tragedy, v. score & 8 b. pts.	10	0	Robinson Crusoe, p. v.	5	0
Macbeth Travesty, p. v.	7	6	Review, p. v.	5	0
Ditto, 4 band parts	5	0	Robert Macaire, 4 band parts	2	6
Madame Angot, p. v.	5	0	Rosina, opera, p. v.	3	6
Maid and Magpie, drama, p. score	8	6	Sentinel, p. v.	5	0
Maid and Magpie, [Byron] burl. p. v.	20	0	Ditto, 14 band parts	15	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0	Sleeping Beauty [Miss Keating] p. v.	5	0
Maid of Mill, opera, p. v.	5	0	Signor Pantaloon, p. v.	20	0
Maid of the Mill, opera, p. v.	2	6	Swiss Swains, v. sc. opening chorus	5	0
Maid with Milking Pail (song)	1	0	Sister's Sacrifice, 11 band parts	15	0
Manager Strutt, 8 band parts	5	0	Sweethearts and Wives, p. v.	5	0
Mariner's Compass, drama, 11 b. p.	15	0	Swiss Cottage, p. v.	5	0
Marriage by Lantern Light, p. v.	5	0	Ditto, 6 band parts	5	6
Marriage Figaro, C'tess pt, with bass	5	0	Slave, The, opera, p. v.	5	0
Mary Tarn, p. v.	10	0	Son-in-law, opera, p. v.	3	6
Ditto, 12 band parts	15	0	St. David's Day, opera, p. v.	3	6
Masanello, burl. p. v.	20	0	Siege of Belgrade, opera, p. v.	2	6
Masanello, drama, 4 band parts	3	6	Shepherd of Comrouilles, p. v.	3	6
Masanello, opera, p. v.	10	0	Sardanapalus, tragedy, entire music	7	6
Matrimony, opera, p. v.	3	6	Trombalcazar, p. v.	7	6
Mazeppa, burl. p. v.	20	0	Trooper's Horn, full score	7	6
Ditto, 10 band parts	10	0	Tell with a vengeance, p. v.	7	6
Medea, burl. full vocal score	10	0	Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0	Tale of Mystery, opera, p. v.	3	0
Merchant of Venice (unpub. songs of)	2	0	Timour the Tartar, opera, p. v.	4	6
Midas, p. v.	5	0	Turnpike Gate, opera, p. v.	3	6
Mids. Night's Dream, [Bishop] p. v.	2	6	Three and the Dence, opera, p. v.	2	6
Military Billy Taylor, p. v.	10	0	Vilkins and Dinah, p. v.	7	6
Miller and Men, burl. p. v.	10	0	Vampire, 4 band parts	5	0
Ditto, 9 band parts	10	0	Watch and Wait, drama, 8 bnd pts	7	6
Miller and Men, drama, 5 band parts	7	6	White Horse of Peppers, p. v.	2	6
Miller and his Men, opera, p. v.	5	0	Ditto, 6 band parts	2	6
Miller Out-witted, 3 band parts	2	6	William Tell [Brough] p. v.	2	6
Mineral, 3 band parts	2	6	White Cat [Keating] p. v.	3	0
Mischief-Making, vocal & 13 b. pts	10	0	White Cat [Planche] full score	5	6
Monsieur Jacques, p. v.	5	0	Whittington and Cat, 7 band parts	5	0
Mother Goose, harl., orig., p. v.	5	0	Welsh Girl, overture, full score	2	6
Motto, burl., p. v.	10	0	Willow Pattern Plate, 9 band parts	7	6
Motto, burl. 9 band parts	15	0	Wallace, Hero of Scot'd, opera, p. v.	3	6
My Grandmother, opera, p. v.	2	6	Waterman, p. v.	2	6
My Poll and my Partner Joe, burl. p. v.	15	0	Who's the Heir, operetta, p. v.	4	0
No, 4 band parts	2	6	Whostole the clock, opera bouffe, p. v.	7	6
No Song, no Supper, opera, p. v.	5	0	Wedding Day, opera, p. v.	5	0
Nursery Rhyme, Fairy play, p. v.	5	0	Widows Bewitched, operetta p. v.	10	0
Of Age to-morrow, opera	3	6	Windsor Castle Burnand op. burl. p. v.	2	6
Of Age and Burydice, [Brough] p. v.	2	6	Yellow Dwarf [Miss Keating] p. v.	3	0
Padlock, The, opera, p. v.	3	6			

TURN HIM OUT!

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

THOMAS J. WILLIAMS, Esq.

[MEMBER OF THE DRAMATIC AUTHORS' SOCIETY.]

AUTHOR OF

Act on Parle Francais, Old Gooseberry, Who is Who? or, All in a Fog, The Peep Show Man, Tweedleton's Tail Coat, Turn Him Out, The Better Half, My Wife's Maid, The Trials of Tomkins, Jack's Delight, An Ugly Customer, Nursey Chickweed, On and Off, A Race for a Widow, I've Written to Brown, Peace and Quiet, Ruth Oakley, Gossip, Truth and Fiction, Cruel to be Kind, The Silent System, A Charming Pair, The Little Sentinel, The Desert Flower, Little Daisy, My Dress Boots, Pipkin's Rustic Retreat, My Turn Next, Found in a Four-Wheeler, Larkin's Love Letters, Lion Slayer; or, Out for a Prowl! Dandelion's Dodges, A Cure for the Fidgets, A Silent Protector, One Too Many for Him, Who's to Win Him? Flo's First Frolic, The Volunteer Review; or, the Little Man in Green. etc., etc., etc.

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TURN HIM OUT.

First performed at the Royal Strand Theatre (under the management of Mr. W. H. Swanborough) on Monday, August 17th. 1863.

Characters.

7463 • NICODEMUS NOBBS (an itinerant vendor of juvenile toys).....	Mr. TURNER.
MR. MACKINTOSH MOKE.....	Mr. VOLLAIRE.
MR. EGLANTINE ROSELEAF	Mr. BELFORD.
JULIA.....(<i>Moke's Wife</i>).....	Miss THORNE.
SUSAN.....(<i>a maid of all-work</i>)	Miss JENNY WHITE.

Two Porters.

* The part of NOBBS is first low comedy.

Scene:—The Interior of Sunflower Lodge.

TIME.—PRESENT DAY.

Time of Representation.—40 Minutes.

Costumes.

NOBBS.—Velveteen jacket, corduroy trowsers, red neckerchief, hat with dolly fastened round it, &c. &c.

MOKE.—1st dress: Smart tweed lounging suit, white hat. 2nd dress: Large mackintosh and overall, wide-awake, comforter, &c.

ROSELEAF.—Dandified make up, light paletot, eye glass, whiskers —(tremendous "swell") lavender kid gloves.

JULIA.—Fashionable walking dress.

SUSAN.—Very smart maid servant's dress, cap with pink ribbon, apron, &c. &c.

TURN HIM OUT.

SCENE FIRST.—*A neatly furnished Apartment. At back, C., a window with large curtains; L. of window a door; two doors, R.; two doors, L.; table, R. C.; cupboard, in flat, R.; two easy chairs; chairs.*

SUSAN discovered looking out of the open window.

SUSAN. Lawks, what a lazy fellow that painter is to be sure; he's leaving off work again. I declare, if he hasn't left his ladder just outside our first floor window. (*coming down*) Well, this is a lively sort of place for a maid of all-work. What could have induced master to come and live in such a out o' the way spot? He calls it his "surburban retreat," and a pretty treat it is; "No thoroughfare" stuck up at one end of the lane, and a deep ditch at the other. I declare, it's that dismal that the afternoon milk's a positive treat, and the nine o'clock beer's a downright excitement. (NOBBS'S voice heard outside, "Only a halfpenny") Hollo! what's that? Why, dear me, there's a man selling tiddly little windmills. (*astounded*) Well, I never, if it arn't my old sweetheart, Nicodemus Nobbs. I declare, I arn't seen him ever since he left our village six years ago. (*making signs to him*) Hi, Mr. Nobbs, hi—holloa! Why, if there arn't missus a coming full chivey down the lane, and a dandy gent, in lavender kids, a running after her. Well, I never see such impudence!

Enter JULIA hastily, door L. in flat.

JULIA. (*slamming and locking door*) Safe at last. The impertinent puppy!

SUSAN. Why, what's the matter, ma'am?

ROSELEAF. (*outside*) Open the door, or I shall expire on the mat—I weally shall!

JULIA. (*indignantly*) Leave the house directly, sir, or I'll send for the police.

ROSE. (*outside*) I'll wetire for the pwesent; but I'll weturn. I said I would, and so I will, 'pon my sacwed honour!

JULIA. Presumptuous coxcomb! (*listening—noise of retreating footsteps*) Ah! he's going.

SUSAN. But who is he, mum?

JULIA. (L.) I have no idea. One of those empty-headed

fops, whose only pleasure is to persecute unprotected females by their hateful attentions. Every time I have been out this week I have been waylaid by that odious fellow; and this time, he has not only had the audacity to follow me home, but, when I opened the door with my latch key, he positively forced his way into the passage!

SUSAN. (R.) Well, I never did! This comes o' master's being away from home. I declare, if I was married, I'd never allow my husband to go out of town by himself—that I wouldn't! Howsomedever, I 'spose he'll soon be back now?

JULIA. He says nothing about coming home in his last letter; I can't think what's detaining him. (*stopping*) I am sure that impertinent fellow is walking about under the window now.

SUSAN. I'll just have a peep. (*approaches window, c.*) Oh! goodness gracious, lawk a mussy, he's coming up the painter's ladder!

JULIA. (*who has meanwhile approached window—in horrible alarm*) Ah! as I live 'tis my odious persecutor! (*runs away from window—at this moment ROSELEAF'S head is seen through open window*)

ROSE. Aw, aw! I said I would, and so I will, 'pon my sacwed honour.

JULIA. (*horribly alarmed*) Don't let him in! send him away, upset him—what unheard of audacity. (*rushes off first door, L.*)

SUSAN. (*bawling*) Go away, sir, adone, sir; why, he's getting in. (*ROSELEAF gets in at window*) Go away, imperence! get out, how dare you—

ROSE. Where's the lovely mistwess of this extwemely desiwable villa wesidence?

SUSAN. What's that to you, Mr. Imperence! If you don't take yourself out of this extwemely desiwable villa wesidence directly, I'll give you in charge.

ROSE. Now don't be so fewocious—could'nt you contwive me an interview with the adowable cweature?

SUSAN. (*indignantly*) No, I could'nt!

ROSE. (*producing purse*) Could'nt you manage to secwete me somewhere, so that I might wush forth and take the distwacting cweature by surprise? Aw, aw! I'll stand half-a-crown.

SUSAN. (*aside*) A bright idea; I *will* secwete him somewhere, and lock him in while I fetch a policeman. (*aloud*) La! now, what persevering creatures you gentlemen are—just step in here, and I'll see what I can do for you.

ROSE. (*complacently—second door, R.*) It stwuck me she'd come round—the dear cweatures can't wesist me, aw, aw! I said I would, and so I will, 'pon my sacwed honour. (*enters*)

TURN HIM OUT.

SUSAN. (*turning key*) There you are, my fine fellow, safe under lock and key—(*imitating*)—'pon my sacred honor!

Re-enter JULIA, door L.

JULIA. (*looking round*) Is he gone?

SUSAN. Not he; hush! he's there. (*pointing to room*) I've locked him in, and now I'm off for a policeman.

JULIA. Run, run, but stay, a policeman always involves a crowd, and as my husband is from home, any fuss of that sort would be very annoying. (*puzzled*) Now, what is to be done? (NOBBS, L., *outside heard calling*, "Only a halfpenny")

SUSAN. I know what's to be done; there's a friend of mine outside, I'll call him up. (*goes to window*)

JULIA. (*following, surprised*) A friend of yours?

SUSAN. Yes, a young man in the windmill interest. (*at window calling*) Hi! you with the mills!

JULIA. (*surprised*) Why, surely you are not calling that pedlar?

SUSAN. You leave it to me, mum, he'll turn him out like a flash o' lightning. Hi, Mr. Nobbs, hi!

NOBBS. (*outside*) Who's a calling o' Nobbs?

JULIA. (*aside*) Dear, dear, what a very disagreeable necessity to be sure. (SUSAN opens door L. flat)

Enter NOBBS, door L. flat—he wears a velveteen jacket, corduroy trousers, coloured neckerchief—he carries an immense stock of toy windmills, the whole of which are in motion—dolls and other toys in basket.

NOBBS. (C., *declaiming*) Want anything in the diminutive windmill line? Only a halfpenny—hobserve the slightest agitation of the harm sets the whole hedifice in haction. (*pulling string*) Hindependent of hany hartificial hassistance from hair or hatmosphere!

SUSAN. (L., *emphatically*) It ain't mills we want, Mr. Nobbs.

NOBBS. (*starting*) Mr. Nobbs! (*tragically*) Why, no—yes—yes—no—yes, it is—it is. What, Susy Hopkins! (*rushes to embrace her with stack of windmills on his arm*) Why, Susy, I ain't seed you ever since I left the village.

SUSAN. Well, Mr. Nobbs, it is perniscuous, ain't it? but we musn't waste time in how-de-dooing—missus here wants you to do her a sarvice.

JULIA. (R.) In exchange for half-a-sovereign.

NOBBS. (*astounded*) Half-a-sovereign? By jingo, what wouldn't I do for half-a-sovereign? (*putting down mills*)

JULIA. My good fellow, I want you to rid my house of a person who annoys me dreadfully.

NOBBS. A broker's man I dare say—I'm on to him!

SUSAN. It ain't a broker's man, it's a dandified fellow as has been persecutin' missus.

NOBBS. (*carefully tucking up sleeves*) Where is he? I'll persecute him. (*pointing to stack of mills*) Them's not the only mills I'm accustomed to—I'm a dabster at the "one, two, three." (*strikes a fancy boxing attitude*) I was going in for the championship, but couldn't find no backers, and training's expensive! (*strikes another fancy attitude*)

JULIA. Pray use no unnecessary violence.

NOBBS. But mayn't I just give him one for hisself?

JULIA. No—no.

NOBBS. (*striking another fancy attitude*) Mayn't I just tip him the postman's knock?

JULIA. No—no. All I want you to do is simply to turn him out, as speedily as possible.

NOBBS. (*excited*) Turn him out. I'll turn him out—but where is he?

SUSAN. Hush! he's in this room. (*crosses to door, R.*) I'll unlock the door. (*quietly unlocks door, R.*)

JULIA. (*crosses to L.*) We'll now retire and leave you to commence operations.

SUSAN. (*going—aside to NOBBS, pantomiming boxing*) I say, Nobbs, you just give it the imperent coxcomb.

NOBBS. All right, Susy, you leave him to me.

Exeunt JULIA and SUSAN, L.

NOBBS. (*alone*) I'll give him ten shillings worth, he shall have the exact wally in black and blue. (*begins systematically taking off his coat*)

ROSE. (*opens door and pops his head out, not seeing NOBBS*) Vewy stwange that servant doesn't come to welease me. (*perceiving NOBBS*) Good gwacious! a vulgar cweature in cordewoys—I'd better wetire again. (*disappears*)

NOBBS. (*continuing his preparations*) To think, now, that I should come across my old flame Susy Hopkins in this here permiscuous manner—but, stop a bit, before I commences operations I must first of all put my stock in trade out of harm's way—I'll just deposit my mills on the mat outside, and then for business! I'll accommodate him with ten shillings worth!

Exit, L., door in flat, with mills.

Enter MOKE, L. & E., he is dressed in a somewhat loud travelling suit.

MOKE. Aha! here I am at last—how delightful it is after a long fatiguing journey to find oneself safe and snug at home, with the refreshing prospect of lunch, dressing gown, and slippers in perspective. I've left my luggage at the "Pig and Mermaid!" and have come in through the garden and up the back staircase, en purpose to take my little wify by surprise!

How delighted my little wify will be to see me. (*knowingly*) She thinks I have been travelling on particular business, but not a bit of it. (*chuckling*) I've been having a delightful fortnight all to myself at Scarborough. ~~Oh! that distracting little widow in the velvet hat and feathers, how delightfully she danced The Polka Mazourka! she mistook me for a gay young bachelor. Aha! what a deceitful young dog I am—(begins dancing about) Tra-la-la, tra-la-la—it's too bad of me, it really is, but it's a way I've got—(continues dancing and singing in a highly converted manner)~~

Re-enter NOBBS, door, L.

NOBBS. (*perceiving MOKE and mistaking him for ROSELEAF watches him for a moment and then exclaims*) Oh! there you are. (*crosses*)

~~MOKE. (starting and stopping short) Eh!~~

NOBBS. (*sarcastically*) You're a pretty dancer, you are.

MOKE. (*surprised*) Who the devil's this?

NOBBS. You've come out, have you?

MOKE. (*surprised*) Come out?

NOBBS. (*menacingly*) You inveterate scoundrel! (*advancing towards him*) Now then, just hook it, will you?

MOKE. (*surprised*) Me hook it?

NOBBS. How dare you go about intruding yourself into the buzzings of respectable families, through their first floor windows?

MOKE. (*surprised*) What the devil do you mean?

NOBBS. (*continuing*) You're a pretty sort of chap to go gallivanting—ho! ho! there's a phizzy mahogany!

MOKE. (*surprised*) A phizzy mahogany?

NOBBS. Vy you ought to be ashamed o' yourself at your time o' life, you vile destroyer of domestic peace—don't you see that the good lady won't have nothing to say to yer?

MOKE. (*astounded*) The good lady—what good lady?

NOBBS. Why, the good lady as lives here.

MOKE. (*astounded*) What Mrs. M.?

NOBBS. Her name arn't nothing to do with the matter. (*scornfully*) You thought you were going to come the gay deceiver, did yer?

MOKE. (*bewildered*) Gay deceiver!

NOBBS. But it arn't to be done. I'm here!

MOKE. I see you are. (*angrily*) Why the devil are you here?

NOBBS. (*impressively*) Why—why, to turn you out, and in double quick time too.

MOKE. Turn me out! (*bursting into a towering passion*) Turn out yourself, vile costermonger!

NOBBS. Costermonger! (*squaring up at him in a highly scientific attitude*) Just favour me with that 'ere hohserwation again!

MOKE. (*retreating round table*) Get out of the house, you outrageous specimen of plebeian impertinence!

NOBBS. (*who has meanwhile continued his scientific evolutions*) Aha! do you want to fall all over the carpet in little diminutive morsels? (*seizes and shakes him violently*)

MOKE. (*roaring*) Oh, oh! Why, the monster's as strong as a lion. Leave go!

NOBBS. (*dragging him towards door*) Out with you!

ROSE. (*opening door and looking out*) What horrid wow is this? Oh, gwacious! a wegular stand-up fight on the premises.

MOKE. (*roaring*) Leave go! Murder!

NOBBS. (*at door—dragging out MOKE*) Come along you old sinner, you.

MOKE. (*struggling*) I won't come along! Help—murder—police—fire—neighbours—thieves!

Exeunt, struggling, door L. in flat—a tremendous bumping heard.

ROSE. (*issuing from room, R.—amazed*) What a howwid wow! A terwiffic combat between an elderly individual and a cweature in cordewoys. Stwange place this; I weally wish I was safe out of it; but I said I would and so I will, 'pon my sacwed honour! Aha, some one approaches. I'll wetire again.

Re-enters room, R., hastily.

Re-enter NOBBS, from door L. in flat.

NOBBS. I never see such a himpident customer in all my born days. I was obligated for to tip him my "vun, two, three" afore he'd move on. Howsomdever, that little matter's settled!

SUSAN re-enters, L. 1. E., during the last words.

SUSAN. Settled is it; that's all right. Missus will be so glad.

NOBBS. I gave him such a roly-polying down the stairs. I've loosened his false teeth for him!

SUSAN. Serve him right! I've no pity for such impertinent puppies.

NOBBS. (*sentimentally*) But, I say, Susy, to think now of ~~me~~ two coming together agin in this 'ere hunexpected manner; it's for all the world like a story in the *Halfpenny Journal*.

SUSAN. (*gushingly*) It just is, Nicodemus, and no mistake! But, I say, missus is in the study; you'd better go and get your half-a-sovereign.

ROSE. (*popping his head out of door*) Get his half-a-sovereign—oh, gwacious!

NOBBS. (*proachfully*) Half-a-sovereign—I arn't half earned he money. (*squaring up*) Vy, for ten bob I ought to have knocked him clean out of time!

SUSAN. Come along, Mr. Nobbs, missus is awaiting.

NOBBS. (*thoughtfully*) Half-a-sovereign! Why, he ain't had more than five shilling's worth—it's like receiving money under false pretences it is.

Exeunt SUSAN and NOBBS, door L. 1 E.

Re-enter ROSELEAF from room, R.

ROSE. (*in great alarm*) Oh, gwacious! that fellow in the cordewoys has agweed to settle my business for the twifling sum of half-a-sovereign; but he has got hold of the wong man. My symmetwical figure's in danger. I'll be off. (*approaching door at back*) Hallo! somebody's coming up stairs. (*retires a few paces*)

Re-enter MOKE, hat crushed, cravat untied, and coat half off, L. door in flat—he is covered with mud.

MOKE. (*rubbing his arm*) Not a policeman to be found anywhere—that's the worst of a suburban retreat. (*indignantly*) There's the City Police, and there's the Rural Police, but the authorities leave the suburbs to take care of themselves. The idea of a respectable man being positively turned out of his own house—I declare I never had such a shaking in all my life—but Mackintosh Moke isn't going to give it up so. I've come back to be horribly revenged upon that ruffian in the corderoys. I'll let him know who is to turn out. (*looking all round*) Why, where is he?

ROSE. (*slinking towards door*) If I could just contwive to creep out.

MOKE. (*perceiving ROSELEAF*) Ah! a stranger in lavenders. Hollo! you sir—who the devil are you?

ROSE. (*horribly alarmed—stammering violently*) 'Pon my life—a—a—I weally don't wemember.

MOKE. (*furious*) I'm not going to have my suburban retreat converted into a public thoroughfare—know, sir, that my name is Moke!

ROSE. (*alarmed*) The husband, by Jupiter.

MOKE. (*advancing*) Now then, what do you want here?

ROSE. (*stammering violently*) A—a—I've called for the—the—income-tax.

MOKE. The income-tax! then you'd better call again—but stay! (*seizing his hand*) Perhaps you can tell me what that brute in the corduroys was doing in my apartment?

ROSE. (*mysteriously*) I can. (*looks cautiously round*)

MOKE. You can—then do!

ROSE. (*burlesque mystery—tapping him on the chest*) I should wecommend you to leave the countwy directly.

MOKE. (*astounded*) Leave the country?

ROSE. (*mysteriously*) And never return!

MOKE. You would?

ROSE. (*mysteriously*) I should!

MOKE. (*astounded*) You don't pretend to insinuate—

ROSE. (*mysteriously*) I do!

MOKE. You do? (*aside*) The devil he do! What a dreadful suspicion crosses my mind—I'll interrogate Mrs. M. this very moment. I dare say she's in the study.

ROSE. She is, and so is Corduroys.

MOKE. (*with a tragic start*) Corduroys!!

ROSE. (*hurriedly*) But you must excuse me; I'm off.

MOKE. (*alarmed*) Not a bit of it, Lavenders. (*detaining him*) You'll stand by me, Lavenders; you'll help me to exterminate this low-lived desperado. (*in a hoarse whisper*) We'll fall upon him together, Lavenders,—a combined attack of a most tremendous description. (*peeps through keyhole of room, L.*) Why, what do I behold?—Mrs. Moke giving the scoundrel money—a plot against my existence. I—I say, (*turning round alarmed*) I say, Lavenders, you'll protect me, won't you—we'll drop upon the scoundrel and smash him simultaneously.

ROSE. (*evasively*) Ya'as—we'll smash him, of course. (*alarmed*) I hear him coming. (*retreating*) Oh, gwacious!

MOKE. (*detaining him*) Don't run away, Lavenders—you shall hide yourself in yonder cupboard, while I conceal myself behind the curtains, and when I give the signal, Lavenders, we'll rush upon him together—you understand, Lavenders? (*approaches window curtains, and gets behind them*)

ROSE. (*in a great flutter*) Wush upon him? not, if I know it—a—a—I don't welish this style of thing—I'll just wush off and return when the wow's over—I said I would, and so I will 'pon my sacwed honour!

Exit, L. (door in flat) stealthily at back, unseen by MOKE.

MOKE. (*looking from behind curtains*) To think that a shabby ruffian in corduroys should be in secret intelligence with Mrs. Moke. This comes of my staying from home to flirt with fascinating widows. Ah! the ruffian comes. (*conceals himself behind the window curtains*)

Enter NOBBS and SUSAN, L. 1 E.

NOBBS. (*tossing half a sovereign*) As sweet a hinstalment as ever I received—I think I shall cut the juvenile toy trade, and take to protecting females in distress—but, I say, Susan, previous to starting, couldn't you accommodate a fellow with a nip o' sommat invigorating.

SUSAN. Couldn't I—why, of course, I could; I know missus 'ud be agreeable. (*crosses to cupboard, R. in flat, and takes out glass and bottle on tray*)

MOKE. (*popping out his head—aside, furiously*) Would she though?

SUSAN. (*returning with brandy*) This is master's very best foreign brandy, as he only gives to his *particular friends*.

MOKE. (*aside, hysterically*) His *particular friends*! (*shakes his fist*)

NOBBS. Then here's your master's health—I looks towards him. (*drinks, and draws a long breath*) Ah! that's invigorating. I don't keep much of a *car* myself, but I appreciates a good article. Vell, the British public demands my services. I'm off; but I say, Susy, you'll meet us sometimes at the corner, when you goes for the family errands; and I say—you'll gie us a kiss, won't you—gie us a kiss, and I'll gie you a windmill! (*kisses her*)

SUSAN. La! Mr. Nobbs! what a man you are?

MOKE. (*peeping out*) Aha! he's kissing my maid-of-all-work—I—I'll give the signal at once. (*whistles*)

NOBBS. } (*starting*) What's that? (*MOKE whistles again*)

SUSAN. }

NOBBS. (*listening*) It's only the vind a vistlin through the keyhole. (*MOKE whistles again*)

SUSAN. No! it's some one behind the curtains—look—they're shaking to and fro—it's that horrid fellow come back again!

NOBBS. (*starting*) What!!

SUSAN. Oh, goodness, I am so frightened; I'll run and tell missus.

Exit, L. 1 E.

MOKE. (*aside*) Why, where's Lavenders? I'll repeat the signal. (*whistles again*)

NOBBS. He's a vistlin again! (*scientifically tucking up his sleeves and squaring in the direction of curtains*) I'll vistle him! (*approaches curtains*)

MOKE. (*poking his head out*) Now, where the devil is Lavenders?

NOBBS. (*suddenly pouncing upon him*) Aha! it is you, is it? you've come back, have you? (*drags him forward*)

MOKE. (*struggling*) Holloa! gently; here, Lavenders, where the devil are you? hi!

NOBBS. There ain't no Lavenders here! (*squaring up at MOKE, and bobbing scientifically round and round him*) Now, then, where will you have it?

MOKE. (*indignantly*) I won't have it at all; I tell you my name's Moke!

NOBBS. (*continuing to bob round him*) I'll make you!

MOKE. (*dodging him &c.*) I—I'm the proprietor of "Sunflower Lodge."

NOBBS. (*squaring*) Ha! ha! well, you are a cheeky customer.

MOKE. (*retreating, roaring*) I tell you I've just returned from the country!

NOBBS. (*following him up and giving him a tremendous thump*) Then you had better go back again.

MOKE. (*attempting to defend himself—in a towering passion*) I—I won't go back again—here—police! (R.)

NOBBS. Ah! I see you want the "van—two—three" again—I'll spoil your gallivanting for you.

MOKE. (*roaring*) Murder! (NOBBS *runs after him—catches him at second door L., and carries him bodily off*)

NOBBS. (*off stage*) Turn out, you wile impostor—turn out!

MOKE. (*off stage—roaring*) Thieves! police! murder! fire! (*terrific struggle and noise of furniture upsetting and windows breaking heard outside*)

Re-enter JULIA and SUSAN.

JULIA. Dear me, what an awful noise—what a terrible resistance he must be making.

SUSAN. He's the most persevering individual I ever heard on! (*glass crash, L. U. E.—noise ceases*)

Re-enter NOBBS, L. 2 door.

NOBBS. (*triumphantly*) I've turned him out!

JULIA. (*alarmed*) Why what have you done?

NOBBS. I've chucked him out of window.

JULIA. } (*together*) Out of window?

SUSAN. }

NOBBS. Yes; don't be alarmed—he's all right, I dropped him on to a gooseberry bush. I never see such a impident customer—he actually had the owdacity to say he was the proprietor of Sunflower Lodge.

SUSAN. Well I never!

JULIA. What unheard of presumption! My husband is at this moment at Scarborough, and I trust the annoyance to which his wife is subjected, will be a lesson to him, and make him stop at home for the future. (*ring heard at bell*)

SUSAN. Sumun a ringing. Ah! mum, p'raps it's master.

Exit, door in flat.

JULIA. I sincerely hope it is, for I never felt so terrified in my life.

NOBBS. And werry nat'ral too, mum. (*aside*) I wonder whether she'll ask me to dinner.

Re-enter SUSAN, hastily, followed by two PORTERS—bearing a large trunk which they set down at back of stage—N.B. the keyhole side must be turned away from Audience.

SUSAN. Oh, please mum, it arn't master, but it's master's luggage!

JULIA. His luggage? (*to PORTERS*) but isn't my husband there himself.

1ST PORTER. (*knowingly*) He ain't far off, is he, Bill!—ba, ba!

2ND PORTER. (*significantly*) No, that he ain't, Sam—ho, ho!

PORTERS *dig one another playfully in the ribs and exeunt, door in flat, L.*

JULIA. (*puzzled*) Not far off, how very mysterious—however, I suppose he'll soon be here. (*to NOBBS*) Then, my good man, I can only thank you for your zeal and ask you—

NOBBS. (*disappointed*) To move off the premises, I suppose. (*aside*) She might ha' invited me to ~~stop~~ and pick a bit with the governor; but that's female gratitude that is—they'll get all they can out of you and then they don't care what becomes of you. (*aloud*) Then here's wishing you good morning. Good-bye, Susy dear.

SUSAN. Good-bye, Mr. Nobbs. (*aside to NOBBS, L. C.*) Step into the back kitchen—I'll join you, presently.

NOBBS. (*aside*) Back kitchen—all right. (*aside—going*) I wish she had made it the pantry. *Exit, door in flat, L.*

JULIA. And now I trust we shall have a little peace and quiet. (*sits R. of table and takes up work*) By-the-bye, Susan, you must be careful never to mention anything about what has happened to your master. (*at this moment lid of trunk is seen to rise*)

SUSAN. (*at table, R.*) Rely on me, ma'am. (*crosses to R. C.*)

JULIA. It might annoy him. (*MOKE pops his head out over lid of trunk*)

MOKE. (*aside*) Might annoy him? I should rather think it might—the intriguing husseys, I've come back, inside my own box, in order to discover the real state of affairs; I'll petrify them by my unexpected presence. (*rises in trunk and is about to discover himself, when ROSELEAF cautiously peeps in at back*)

ROSE. (*aside*) The stweet door was open. (*advancing to JULIA*) I said I would, and so I will 'pon my sacwed honour!

JULIA. (*screaming*) Ah! here again!

ROSE. (*places his hat on table and throws himself on his knees*) Yes, entwancing creature, here—here—again—always here! (*thumps himself on chest with exaggerated gestures*)

SUSAN. Nobbs is in the kitchen, I'll run and fetch him up.

Exit, door L.

MOKE. (*recognizing ROSELEAF—aside utterly amazed*) Why there's Income-tax at it now!

JULIA. Unhand me, sir. (*breaking from ROSELEAF*) Oh! this is really terrible!

Exit, R. 1 E.

MOKE. (*aside, looking out of box*) I'll just give that Lavenders one for himself.

NOBBS. (*voice heard outside*) Vere is he, let me get at him.

ROSE. (*horribly amazed*) Aha! that howid weptile. Oh gwacious! where the ~~devils~~ shall I run; I'll take wefuge b. (*enters room, R. 2 E.*)

Enter SUSAN and NOBBS, door L.

MOKE. (*aside*) Corduroys, by Jupiter. (*bobs down, box closes with a loud slam*)

SUSAN. (*perceiving the box shut*) What's that? the lid o' the box slammed to? (*looking round and missing ROSELEAF—astounded and pointing significantly to box, crossing to R.*) Well, I never, if he aint hid hisself in master's box!

NOBBS. (*astounded*) I never did see such a hartful customer. Howsomdever we've got him safe this time. (*approaches trunk on tip toe*) As turning out aint o' no use, I'll just turn him in! (*turns key in lock*)

SUSAN. (*clapping her hands*) Ha! ha! he's locked him in—brayvo! capital!

MOKE. (*inside box*) Eh! I say! hollo! what are you doing?

Enter JULIA, door R. 1 E.

SUSAN. Oh, missis! missis! what do you think? (*in a hoarse whisper*) he's in there!

JULIA. (*astounded*) In my husband's trunk!

NOBBS. Ah! he's a sharp 'un—he knows what's what, he does. It aint o' no use mincing the matter, I'll take box and all and drop him into the ditch round the corner. (*endeavours to lift trunk*)

MOKE. (*inside trunk, making a tremendous noise*) No! no! it's all a mistake—murder!

SUSAN. (*who has meanwhile taken ROSELEAF's hat from table*) Oh, mum, here's his hat, with his address inside it—No. 16, Rosemary Villas. Suppose we send him home.

NOBBS. (*takes hat, looks at address and puts hat on*) Very good, I'm agreeable! it's just handy, so I'll charter a light porter, and do the thing in style. (*tugs at box*)

SUSAN. (*assisting*) That way then, Mr. Nobbs, down the little back staircase, and through the garden.

MOKE. (*roaring inside box*) Let me out, it's all a mistake.

NOBBS. Yes, it is a mistake, and a mistake on your side, too. (*tugging violently*) what a precious weight he is to be sure. (*lets go trunk which falls back with a tremendous noise*)

MOKE. (*inside trunk—roaring*) O—o—oh!

NOBBS. Ah, you don't like it, don't you? Come along you wile impostor—gently over the stoeps. (*drags box towards door L.*) Not responsible for damage done, you know, ha, ha!

Exit L. 3 E., dragging box after him—MOKE continuing to shout, "Let me out" &c., &c.

JULIA. (*sinking into chair, R., and fanning herself with pocket handkerchief*) I declare the events of this day have thoroughly exhausted me.

SUSAN. (*sinking into chair, L., and fanning herself with her*

I'm in such a flustration, I don't know where I am, mdever, we've turned him out this time, and no mistake.
 JA. Yes, thank goodness, he can never trouble us again.

- Enter ROSELEAF, R 1 E.

IE. (*issuing cautiously from room, R.*) I said I would, and

JA. } (*screaming violently and starting up*) Ah!!!
 AN. }

JA. (*in a paroxysm of fear*) No, it's impossible—it can't be!
 AN. (*wildly*) I do believe he ain't a human creetur! he's goblin, or a daddy longlegs, or summat supernatral.

JA. Incomprehensible being! how did you get out of ox?

IE. (*surprised*) What box?

JA. The box now on the way to your residence.

AN. With *you* inside it.

IE. (*astounded*) With me inside it? Aha! I compwehend. phantly) They have bagged the wong man, ha, ha, ha! ing short) But, oh, gwacious! (*aside*) they've sent him r pwivate residence. (*horrified*) My wich aunt will hear atwocious behaviour—I'll run home at once, (*to JULIA*) ll return—I said I would, and so I will, 'pon my sacwed r.
Exit, L. door in flat.

AN. (*utterly astounded*) Well, if that ain't mysterious, I know what is?

JA. (*bewildered*) It's the most astounding thing I ever of! I declare I'll remove from Sunflower Lodge the nt my husband returns.

Enter NOBBS, L. 2 door.

BBS. (*hastily*) I've left him at the perscription.

LIA. Left him? Why he's been here again!

BBS. (*astounded*) Here! Who?

LIA. Why, the man in the box.

BBS. I tell you I've just left him, with your compliments, Rosemary-willas, a kicking away like a hinsane donkey.

AN. (*utterly bewildered*) It's getting horful.

LIA. (*amazed*) It really is astounding.

BBS. (*mysteriously*) Conjuring's a fool to this; It's my he arn't no hordinary hinterloper—he's a wampire, or a n-the-box, one or the other—it arn't safe for two unprol females to be left all alone in this 'ere surrubbian willa nce. (*crosses to C.—to JULIA*) You'd better enter into a minent harrangement with me, mum—one pound a week, lodgng, and protection included.

LIA. (*hastily*) Yes, yes, my good man—you had better on your duties at once.

NOBBS. (*triumphantly*) I know'd you couldn't do with out me; but, I say, now that I'm one o' the family like, (*looking at his dress*) p'raps you could accommodate me with a change of togs, in case visitors should call.

SUSAN. Ah! mum, I knows what I'll get him. (*going*)

NOBBS. And, I say, as you *are* so pressing, a snack o' lunch wouldn't do me no positive hinjury.

JULIA. By all means! Susan, supply our heroic defender with whatever he may require.

SUSAN. Leave him to me, mum—I'll take care on him, mum. (*aside—going*) Nicodemus on the premises—lawks! How snug it will be. *Exit, door L. 1 E.*

JULIA. Well, I suppose our annoyances are really over at last. Come what may, nothing shall ever induce me to live in a "surburban retreat" again. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

NOBBS. (*alone—looking round*) Well, I don't know—this 'ere surrubbian retreat is about as snug a crib as I should care to live in—by jingo, if they'd only engage me as a wally-de-sham!—I've had enough of the juvenile toy line—half-penny mills is a werry poor way of raising the wind. I should like to settle down into a quiet, genteel line of hockipation.

Re-enter SUSAN, with dressing-gown and smoking cap, and small tray, on which are cold meat, jug, &c., door L. 1 E.—she places tray on table and approaches NOBBS with gown, &c.

Here you are, Mr. Nobbs—I've brought you master's dressing gown. That's about the style o' thing, eh?

NOBBS. (*putting on gown which is too large for him*) Not exactly what I calls a fit, howsumdever, (*putting on smoking cap*) the general effect's pretty tidy. (*wheels up a large easy chair and sits down at table*) Ah! that's the style. (*rubs his hands joyfully*)

SUSAN. (*affecting surprise*) Well I never, if I ain't been and brought up two plates.

NOBBS. Brayvoo! you'll join in a friendly mossel, won't you, Susy?

SUSAN. (*sitting down at table*) Well now, if it ain't like old times us two a sitting together agin. (*gushingly*) Oh! Nicodemus, do you remember when we used to play at fly the garter?

NOBBS. (*tenderly*) Do I remember, Susy? Of course I do! (*gate bell heard—SUSAN starts up*)

SUSAN. (*sharply*) Drat that bell, I declare there ain't no remembering nothink. *Exit SUSAN, L. door in stat.*

NOBBS. (*with his mouth full*) I never see sich a place for knocks and rings—I hope to goodness it ain't the governor come home. (*pours out beer and drinks*)

*Re-enter SUSAN, with MOKE, enveloped in an immense mackintosh—
—the lower part of his face is entirely concealed by a comforter
—he also wears a wide-awake pulled close down over his eyes—
NOBBS is completely concealed by back of arm chair.*

MOKE. (*disguising his voice*) Letter from Mr. Moke to Mrs ditto—bearer waits

SUSAN. (*aside — snappishly*) Drat the bearer! (*aloud*) I'll give it missus. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

MOKE. (*aside — tragically*) I'm convinced there's a sensation drama of a diabolical description now performing within these walls. I, Mackintosh Moke, have been turned out of my own house—pitched out of my own first-floor window, and rattled about in my own box like a tee-to-tum in fits, but Mackintosh Moke isn't going to give it up so; I'll sift this horrible mystery to the uttermost; and then (*tragically*) for vengeance—full, complete, and terrible! (*stamps*)

NOBBS. (*with his mouthful*) Who's that a stamping on our carpet?

MOKE. (*who has meanwhile come forward, perceiving NOBBS*) Aha! What do I behold? That costermonger, figg'd out in my garments, and consuming my provisions, fire and fury! He seemes to live here! (*watching*) Two plates too! (*furiously*) Mrs. M. has evidently been hob-nobbing with the scoundrel.

NOBBS. (*looking round—with his mouth full*) I say, you in the waterproof. Old Moke ain't a coming home, is he?

MOKE. (*with withering sarcasm*) Perhaps, you'd prefer "old Moke" would stop away?

NOBBS. Stop away! I wish he'd stop away altogether.

MOKE. (*aside—tragically*) He owns it; the miscreant owns it.

NOBBS. (*with his mouth full*) Don't get such snug quarters every day! And then, the missus is so precious kind to me.

MOKE. (*starting violently*) ~~The devil she is!~~ (*widely*) I—I—can't stand this! (*tragically*) I feel an irresistible desire to plunge yon carving knife into the miscreant's bread basket! (*stealthily steps behind table and seizes carving knife*)

NOBBS. (*suddenly turning round*) Now then, gently with that ere implement!

MOKE. (*stammering violently*) I—I—was about—a—a—to cut myself a—a sandwich.

NOBBS. (*retreating to C.*) Then, perhaps, you'll cut it a little farther off—or if you'd cut it altogether, I should prefer it. I don't half like this gent in the waterproof.

Enter JULIA and SUSAN, hastily, R. 1 E.

JULIA. (*looking at letter*) This is really incomprehensible my husband in this letter overwhelms me with the bitterest reproaches!

MOKE. (*aside*) How well she feigns surprise!

JULIA. (*bewildered*) He accuses me of having hired an assassin in corduroys to turn him out, and (*referring to letter—surprised*) throw him out of window!

NOBBS. (*aside*) Corduroys! (*pulling up dressing gown and looking at his nether garments—crossing to R.*

JULIA. (*bewildered*) What on earth does he mean? I'll hasten to him at once. (*turning to MOKE, c.*) But where is my husband?

Enter ROSELEAF during last words cautiously at back, door in flat, L.

ROSE. (L., *not recognizing MOKE—aside*) Where's her husband! (*aloud*) I know where he is. I'll take you to him; (*offering his arm*) he's just wound the corner.

MOKE. (C. E., *hastily interposing—furiously*) He isn't wound the corner.

JULIA. (C. L.) He isn't. (*bewildered*) Then where is he?

MOKE. (*throwing off his cloak—striking a tremendous attitude—tragically*) Here—off! off! disguise, Moke is himself again! Oho! aha! (*burlesque tableau*)

ALL. What!

JULIA. (*joyfully approaching him*) My dear husband!

MOKE. (*tragically*) Woman, avant! (*JULIA starts back in surprise*)

ROSE. (*alarmed*) The husband again! Oh, gwacious! (*gets behind arm chair*)

NOBBS. (R., *dumbfounded*) Husband! and I've been given him "vun, two, three." I'd better make it up at once. (*turns round with extreme cordiality*) Moke, my dear fellow, how are you?

MOKE. (*with tremendous dignity, pushing him away*) Off, burglarious desperado!

JULIA. (*re-approaching*) But, my dear Mackintosh—

MOKE. (*to his wife, who has approached him*) Don't Mackintosh me. Away, deceitful female!

JULIA. (*astounded*) Deceitful female! is it possible? Yes—yes—I see it all. (*to NOBBS*) You've been turning out the wrong man.

NOBBS. (*bewildered*) So I perceive. But where's the right un?

ROSE. (*aside*) It stwikes me, I'd better be off. (*creeps stealthily from behind arm chair, and makes for the door*)

JULIA. Why, there he goes! (*pointing to ROSELEAF*)

NOBBS. Aha! (*running after him*) No, you don't—not a bit of it! (*dragging him back*) Oho! you're the hidetical, are you?

ROSE. (*horribly alarmed*) No, I'm not—pon honour, I'm not!

MOKE. (*seizing ROSELEAF by the ear*) You've called for the income tax have you?

NOBBS. (*dragging him*) Then, we'll give you nine-pence in the pound! I've turned a 'spectable man out of his own house, and all along o' you, eh?

ROSE. (*stammering*) N—n—no—I—I—I—Oh, gwacious ! this is dweadful !

NOBBS. (*continuing*) Howsomdever, the 'spectable gentleman went out o' that window. (*pointing off, L. 2 E.*) The wile imposter shall go out o' this !

MOKE. (*seizes ROSE.*) Out with him !

ROSE. (*struggling—horribly alarmed*) No—no—you wouldn't be so cwuel ?

MOKE. } (*together*) Wouldn't I though ! (*MOKE and NOBBS*

NOBBS. } *take him to window, C.*)

NOBBS. Now, then, prepare for instant hextermination. (*they take ROSELEAF and attempt to raise him*)

ROSE. (*in an agony of terror*) Murder !

JULIA. } (*screaming*) Ah !

SUSAN. }

MOKE. Out with him ! the ornamental water butt's just outside. (*they lift him on to window ledge*)

ROSE. (*on his knees on window ledge—to JULIA suppliantly*) A—a—you wouldn't suffer them to sacwifice an intewesting fellow cweature ?

JULIA. Well, (*laughing*) I'm afraid I must intercede for him after all. (*to ROSELEAF*) You'll never persecute unprotected females again ?

ROSE. (*stammering*) I said I would, but, I weally (*looking at JULIA who is checking him*) won't, upon my sacwed honour.

MOKE. (*releasing him*) Let me catch you calling for any more income-tax, that's all. (*aside*) ~~It serves me right for flirting with fascinating widows, when I've got a charming wife at home.~~

NOBBS. (*releasing ROSELEAF who re-enters, and approaching MOKE—making a leg*) No offence, your honor's worship—if I did turn you out it was all for your own good you know. (*taking off dressing gown, &c.*)

MOKE. My own good ? (*rubbing his arm ruefully*) Ahem ! I don't know how to express my gratitude.

NOBBS. Then I'll tell you. Engage me as a wally-de-sham—

SUSAN. Oh, *do*, sir ! he'll look splendacious in red plush.

MOKE. (*aside*) He certainly would make a magnificent Johnny.

NOBBS. And if you wants a reference, I've plenty o' references. (*to Audience*) You'll give me a reference, won't you, ladies and gentlemen ? I always exert myself to give satisfaction, so recommend the engagement, and I'll take care you shall never have occasion to say "Turn Him Out."

JULIA. MOKE. NOBBS. SUSAN. ROSELEAF.

R.

Curtain.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the human brain, and to a description of the various parts of the brain and their functions.

2. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the brain and the various methods of treating them.

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the nerves and the various methods of treating them.

4. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the eyes and the various methods of treating them.

5. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the ears and the various methods of treating them.

6. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the nose and the various methods of treating them.

7. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the throat and the various methods of treating them.

8. The eighth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the lungs and the various methods of treating them.

9. The ninth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the stomach and the various methods of treating them.

10. The tenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the intestines and the various methods of treating them.

11. The eleventh part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the liver and the various methods of treating them.

12. The twelfth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the spleen and the various methods of treating them.

13. The thirteenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the pancreas and the various methods of treating them.

14. The fourteenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the gall bladder and the various methods of treating them.

15. The fifteenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the bladder and the various methods of treating them.

16. The sixteenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the uterus and the various methods of treating them.

17. The seventeenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the ovaries and the various methods of treating them.

18. The eighteenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the vagina and the various methods of treating them.

19. The nineteenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the penis and the various methods of treating them.

20. The twentieth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the testicles and the various methods of treating them.

21. The twenty-first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the prostate gland and the various methods of treating them.

22. The twenty-second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the rectum and the various methods of treating them.

23. The twenty-third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the sigmoid colon and the various methods of treating them.

24. The twenty-fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the cecum and the various methods of treating them.

25. The twenty-fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the appendix and the various methods of treating them.

26. The twenty-sixth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the small intestine and the various methods of treating them.

27. The twenty-seventh part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the large intestine and the various methods of treating them.

28. The twenty-eighth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various diseases of the anus and the various methods of treating them.

AN
ODD LOT.

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY
WALTER GORDON, Esq.,

(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society,)

AUTHOR OF

**Dearest Mamma, Duchess or Nothing, Home for a Holiday, The State
Prisoner, Old Trusty, Two can Play at that Game,
My Wife's Relations,
&c., &c.**

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

AN ODD LOT.

First performed at the New Royalty Theatre, (under the management of Mrs. C. Selby) on Easter Monday, March 28th, 1864.

Characters.

HAMMER.....	(a retired Auctioneer)	.....	Mr. W. H. STEPHENS.
EDGAR.....	(his Nephew)	.....	Mr. W. PHELPS.
ALPHONSE			Mr. J. ROBINS.
ADELA.....	(Niece to Hammer)	.....	Miss TURTLE.
ZEPHYRINA			Miss H. PELHAM.
BECKY.....	(Servant to Hammer)	.....	Mrs. C. SELBY.

Costumes.

HAMMER. *1st Dress*:—Light trousers and waistcoat, dressing gown. *2nd Dress*:—Light trousers and waistcoat, blue dress coat and brass buttons.

EDGAR. Frock coat, trousers, light waistcoat, &c.

ALPHONSE. Light paletot, trousers, and hat (French cut).

ADELA. White muslin dress.

ZEPHYRINA. Showy light silk dress and mantle, trimmed with black lace, black hat, white feather.

BECKY. *1st Dress*:—Cotton dress, white apron and bib. *2nd Dress*:—Cotton dress, small light silk shawl, showy cap, and large bouquet.

Time in Representation :—35 Minutes.

AN ODD LOT.

SCENE.—*An Apartment—doors, R. C., and L. 2 E.; window L. 3 E.; sofa, R.; table with breakfast, L.; arm chair and footstool, L. of table; chair with umbrella, R. of table; chair with a railway rug, near C. doors; flower stand at window; other furniture to fill out Scene.*

HAMMER *discovered on sofa, reading newspaper*—BECKY *preparing breakfast at table, L.*

HAMMER. (*yawning*) Goodness gracious! what can be the matter with me? I am not going to be ill I hope. Since I left my auctioneering business, and knocked myself down for a peaceful lot, in this retired country town, I never felt so knocked up. (*yawns*) The symptoms are becoming alarming.
(*feels his pulse*)

BECKY. (*at table*) Your breakfast's ready, Mr. Hammer.

HAMMER. (*suddenly*) Oh!

BECKY. (*alarmed*) Lor! what *is* the matter with you, sir?

HAMMER. Becky, you have hit upon the solution of the important problem.

BECKY. Have I? ah, sir, I always know'd as how I was no fool.

HAMMER. Becky, I have been anxiously debating with myself whether the fits of yawning which have afflicted me for the last half hour, proceeded from any derangement of my system; but I have discovered the clue to the enigma—I wanted my breakfast.

BECKY. Which it's quite ready, sir—and all hot.

HAMMER. (*crossing and sits at table, in arm chair*) The savoury odours announce the fact. Where's my niece, Adela?

BECKY. She's had her tea and toast. 'Twixt you and I, sir, she's off her feed—I think she's in love.

HAMMER. In love! well, it's possible—she's not like me, all intellect. But intellect must be nourished—(*eats*) It's the degrading necessity of animal nature.

BECKY. Lor, sir! don't go calling yourself names in that way.

HAMMER. I'm not speaking of myself, Becky, but of ordinar

humanity. I am a man of intellect (*eats*)—you, Becky, are a woman——

BECKY. And one of the right sort, I flatter myself, sir.

HAMMER. Yes, Becky, I think I may say you are—and one exactly suited to a man of education, and intellect—(*eats*) like myself. You can grill a mutton chop to admiration—nothing excels your puffs; and, as an auctioneer, I know what a puff is worth—the dressing of your hare is first rate—and in curl papers——

BECKY. Lor, sir! my hair in curl papers?

HAMMER. I mean in papillotte—your cutlets are exquisite. I have thus catalogued all your substantial qualities, saying nothing of your discretion and propriety—I have never perceived, or even suspected a follower.

BECKY. As for that, sir, I'll take my davy——

HAMMER. Don't take anything—not even the trouble. As an auctioneer, I can appraise your value, and I can rely with confidence upon my appreciation. (*rises*) Becky, that calf's heart was exquisitely stuffed, and it induces me to relieve my own of its stuffing. I have never married, Becky; intellect has hitherto been opposed to a marriage of inclination—consequently, not having married, I've remained a bachelor.

BECKY. (R. C.) You don't say so sir?

HAMMER. (L. C.) But I *do* say so! Listen, and don't interrupt. A bright idea has however dawned upon me—I might marry without love—not that I object to that weakness on the part of a woman who may adore me.

BECKY. Oh, Mr. Hammer, there's many a young woman——

HAMMER. Don't interrupt! If I quit my present condition it shall not be alone, Becky—it shall not be alone.

BECKY. In course not, sir! you'll take a nice, tidy, respectable young woman.

HAMMER. Trust to my genius for valuation. But first, I must get my nephew, Edgar, and my niece, Adela, off my hands. My defunct sister, who was a woman of no intellect, believed in affection, and all such romantic rubbish, and made me promise to let her children have their own free choice, and knock themselves down——

BECKY. Lor, sir!

HAMMER. I mean marry according to their own inclinations. I swore——

BECKY. Did you really, sir? I shouldn't have thought it of you.

HAMMER. That's to say, I vowed to obey her wishes. Edgar has just finished his studies in town; and I have taken Adela home from school. So now they may fall in love as soon as *they please*.

BECKY. Oh, yes, sir! the sooner the better.

HAMMER. Becky, that aspiration is immoderate! But, as I have reason to believe, that neither one or the other is possessed of any force of intellect, the probabilities are in favour of its fulfilment. They have money and expectations.

BECKY. Then they have got the needful.

HAMMER. As regards the money, it will be paid over to them. As to their expectations from their bachelor uncle here present, they will be nil. As soon as they are married, I shall have a new coat made, purchase a bridal wreath and veil—and—and—marry you.

BECKY. Me! oh dear! you take away my breath. (*aside*) I ought to faint—I will. (*aloud*) Oh, sir! support me!

HAMMER. Don't give way to weakness—you are too heavy.

BECKY. Well, then, I won't.

HAMMER. That's right.

BECKY. Oh, sir, you must allow me the weakness of loving you—oh, Hercules!

HAMMER. Repress this flattering emotion, Becky—It's premature—dissimulate your extacy; go to market, and buy me a chicken for dinner—be sure it's tender.

BECKY. Oh, yes, sir, it shall be nice and tender about the breast—I know what you likes.

HAMMER. (*aside*) When a man of intellect marries his cook, it is to make sure of being properly stewed, roasted, and generally done for. (*aloud*) I think I hear my niece, Adela—now go. (*crosses L.*)

BECKY. Yes, sir; oh, Hercules! (*aside—going*) When we are married, catch me cooking for you—I'll have a drudge of my own, and won't I serve her out, if she's saucy. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

HAMMER. Now that's what I call a good morning's work—I have got a wife, and saved the cook's wages.

Enter ADELA, R. D. with letter.

ADELA. Oh! uncle! uncle! uncle!

HAMMER. (L.) Had I three ears—but I haven't, as far as I can estimate my own individuality—nevertheless, I will hear you.

ADELA. (R.) Here's a letter from brother Edgar, with the London post mark.

HAMMER. (*taking it*) His answer; now for it. I have acquainted him with the wish of your late mother—the most worthy—but the most unbusiness-like of women—to wit, that I should permit him, without let or hindrance, to marry the object of his choice, whoever she might be.

ADELA. Only him?

HAMMER. Yes, and you too.

ADELA. Oh, how nice!

HAMMER. Repress this exuberance of vivacity, I entreat you, Adela. (*opens letter*) But what does Edgar advertise?

ADELA. Oh, do tell me; I am dying of curiosity.

HAMMER. Repress, my dear child, repress. (*reading*) "Beloved uncle,"—Too strong by half—he wants something—"Nothing could arrive more opportunely, than your affectionate letter. My poor, dear mother's wishes shall be instantly respected. I intend to take the early morning train, and come down to you to-morrow, with the adorable being to whom I devote my future existence. I was embarrassed how to disclose to you that my choice was fixed for ever; but your letter settled the matter, and made me the happiest of men."

ADELA. (*jumping with joy*) Oh, here's news!

HAMMER. Repress, my child, repress. (*reading*) "You will find that the lady of my choice occupies an elevated position in society." Is that boy going to marry a duchess? "Prepare all for our reception," etc., etc., etc. The usual flourish.

ADELA. And is Edgar coming to-day? Oh! I'm so happy.

HAMMER. I shall never teach that child the value of repression. Well! I must say this intelligence is highly satisfactory. Why, we shall have a wedding in the house before we know where we are.

ADELA. Two, perhaps.

HAMMER. Two—what do you mean? (*aside*) Can Becky have divulged our secret?

ADELA. Haven't I the right to choose as well as my brother?

HAMMER. Of course.

ADELA. Well then, uncle, here's more news for you—my choice is made.

HAMMER. Why, you don't mean to say you are in love?

ADELA. Yes, uncle; and he is such a duck!

HAMMER. How can you be such a goose as to form such a foul attachment? But moderate your rhapsodies, my child—who is the volatile in question?

ADELA. An artist!

HAMMER. A painter?

ADELA. No, the conjuror who performed at Mrs. Trimmer's when the prizes were distributed.

HAMMER. What! the disciple of Professor Frickel? A juggler!

ADELA. (*falling on his shoulder*) Alas! uncle, he has juggled away my heart.

HAMMER. Then he must juggle it back again.

ADELA. Impossible!

HAMMER. Nonsense! He gave me my watch, which he had pounded in a mortar; and my handkerchief, which he burned

before my very eyes. I'm not going to have a mountebank for a nephew, I can tell you.

ADELA. An artist, uncle—an artist, who has performed before all the crowned heads of Europe.

HAMMER. Humbug! a man who makes pancakes in his hat.

ADELA. But I love him.

HAMMER. A fellow who would put an extinguisher over you.

ADELA. Think of the honour of being uncle to such a great man!

HAMMER. Honour, indeed! what would your brother say, who is about to unite himself to a lady occupying an elevated position in society, when he introduced his bride to a brother-in-law who swallows lighted tow? You'll never get him to swallow that.

ADELA. Edgar would never be so unjust; he has made his choice after the dictates of his own heart—why should he condemn mine?

HAMMER. Adela, I shall never knock down such a lot to you.

ADELA. Well, I'll bid for no other; I'll die an old maid.

HAMMER. (*aside*) That wouldn't suit my book. (*aloud*) Then, degenerate girl, by the avuncular authority which I have the right to exercise over you, and in the face of all my household gods, I give you my—(*raises his arm as if to curse her*)

ADELA. (*falling on her knees*) Spare me!

HAMMER. My consent to follow your own inclinations.

ADELA. Oh, my dear uncle! what a charming man you are.

HAMMER. Well, I dare say I am. (*ADELA goes to window and arranges flowers*)

ADELA. I am sure you will like Alphonse.

HAMMER. Oh! his name's Alphonse, is it?

ADELA. Yes; isn't it a pretty name?

HAMMER. What's in a name? Is he a foreigner?

ADELA. Yes, a Frenchman; I shall be Madame Alphonse; think of that, uncle. Oh! there he is, in the pastry-cook's shop opposite. (*she waves her hand to him from window*)

HAMMER. (*goes to window*) What! that fellow eating a penny ice?

ADELA. Yes, that's Alphonse. (*beckons to him*)

HAMMER. Goodness gracious! what are you doing?

ADELA. I am only beckoning to him to come here, and receive your blessing.

HAMMER. I'll throw it to him like a copper, out of window.

ADELA. He's coming.

Runs off, c. door.

HAMMER. So he is—and there's all my plate about! (*wraps forks, &c., &c., in table napkin*) There's no knowing what he may do; he may even juggle my easy chair into his waistcoat pocket. (*goes over to R.*)

Enter ADELA, leading ALPHONSE, C. door.

ADELA. Come in, Alphonse; here is my uncle.

ALPHON. (*L., aside*) A comfortable looking old party; but decidedly weak in the upper story—so much the better for me.

ADELA. (*C.*) Uncle, this is Alphonse de Beauvisage.

HAMMER. (*crossing to C.*) So, sir, you are—

ALPHON. Alphonse de Beauvisage, professor de chiromancie—necromancy—prestidigitation—ventriloque—fantasmagorie, and all other delusions. (*speaking in a foreign accent*)

HAMMER. I've no doubt of it.

ALPHON. Master of Arts, from the Universities of Hamburg and Baden-Baden, in the science of legerdemain, or as you call, sleight-of-hand.

HAMMER. Very likely.

ALPHON. Who has had the honour of being applauded by all the crowned heads of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and the fifth *quarter* of the globe—Australia—the Grand Turk, and the Pacha of Jericho.

HAMMER. (*aside*) I wish you were there now.

ALPHON. For the truth of my assertion, *vide* the splendid wood-cut on the bills, representing M. Alphonse surrounded by all the sovereigns of every country, with their crowns upon their heads.

HAMMER. (*C.*) No doubt you would sooner have had the crowns in your pocket. Decidedly convincing.

ALPHON. Would you like to see a specimen of my talent? Behold! (*takes up umbrella and a plate, and twirls the plate on it*) You see. (*plate falls and breaks*) No deception.

HAMMER. Oh, no! no deception that one of my best plates is broke to pieces.

ALPHON. Now I shall make your umbrella pass into the possession of the Queen of Timbuctoo. Hey—presto—gone! (*sticks the umbrella up the back of his coat, so as to be seen above the collar*) No deception—no deception!

HAMMER. Why, there it is, sticking up over your coat collar.

ALPHON. It has just come back into that extraordinary and miraculous position. Now in one moment I will send this packet to the end of the world. (*takes up napkin containing forks, &c.*—HAMMER takes it quickly)

HAMMER. Thank you! I'd rather you didn't! (*puts parcel in his pocket*) All my family plate—I dare say, indeed! (*aside*) Send it to the end of the world—he'd have sent it to my uncle's.

ALPHON. Now keep your eye on me: this loaf of bread shall disappear. (*takes bread*)

HAMMER. I dare say it will—he'll eat it!

ALPHON. I hear somebody coming. (*as they turn, he puts bread into hat, and puts it on*) Hey! presto—gone. Where would you like to find it?

HAMMER. Well, not far; under one of my flower pots.

ALPHON. That's nothing; what do you say to my hat? (*takes off hat, loaf falls out*) No deception! No deception!

ADELA. (R.) Charming, isn't it, uncle?

HAMMER. Very, my dear! but as I presume you didn't come here to give me a morning performance, may I ask what *did* bring you here? (*pulls out snuff box and takes snuff*)

ALPHON. (*taking box*) Zist! Cric! crac! return. *Voilà*, your box of snuff. (*puts it up his sleeve, it falls out*) No deception! no deception!

HAMMER. (*picking it up*) I won't dispute your talent for sleight-of-hand. You wish to marry my niece?

ADELA. Yes, uncle! and I wish to marry him!

HAMMER. Well, it comes pretty much to the same thing. Now as I don't seem to care about having a conjuror for a nephew, can't you contrive to adopt another profession, less glorious, but more lucrative.

ALPHON. Aged, but respectable, party—never! I adore my *art* and its *mysteries*. No power on earth shall compel me to renounce it.—Nothing! Nothing!

HAMMER. Nothing?

ALPHON. But a comfortable independence.

HAMMER. I thought as much! (*aside*) Now, then, I must know something about your history, your birth, and education.

ALPHON. As I never knew either my father or my mother, I cannot say I was born of poor, but honest, parents; they were probably the one, though I cannot answer for their being the other. I was brought up by the *paternal* care of an uncle and aunt. She, poor thing, never appreciated the *striking* proofs of affection bestowed on her by my amiable uncle; so one fine morning she disappeared, leaving no traces of her whereabouts—I shed bitter tears for the loss of her—(*takes out handkerchief*)

HAMMER. Proceed, as soon as you have recovered yourself; your story is interesting.

ALPHON. I then gave myself up to my studies—I went to school.

HAMMER. (*aside*) National or ragged? (*aloud*) Preparatory?

ALPHON. Yes, preparatory to my grand career, I learnt my lessons in the streets of the grand metropolis, studying human nature in all its phases—Punch and Judy in particular; from those illustrious professors I imbibed the first great principles of my art. A brilliant engagement was offered me in a wandering company of acrobats—I accepted; not from self interest—No. Can you guess why?

HAMMER. Well—because—because—I give it up.

ALPHON. Because my uncle, who was no less striking in his affection to me, departed this life. I allowed more bitter tears to escape me, and then set out in search of my aunt. But I have sought her in vain—she has disappeared like a beautiful star.

ADELA. There's a noble heart for you, uncle.

HAMMER. Very affecting—touching in the extreme. You'll allow me to shed a tear. (*takes out handkerchief, but only blows his nose*) But a marriage with my niece can't be cooked up like one of your own pancakes.

ADELA. But, uncle, by my mother's will, I can do as I please—and marry whom I please.

ALPHON. And, with the aforesaid little independence, I might be prevailed upon to renounce my mysterious and glorious art.

ADELA. Never, Alphonse, never! I love you as the professor of your noble art; and a professor's wife I will be.

(*crossing to C., and taking his hand*)

HAMMER. That ever your mother should have left me a silly romantic child to bring up! she must have died on purpose to plague me; but some people will do anything! There is nothing to be done or said to such silly people. Now this is my opinion—

ALPHON. I perfectly agree with you.

HAMMER. Why you don't know what it is! (*crossing to C.*)

ALPHON. What does that matter, so long as I agree with you.

HAMMER. I must have a month to think about it.

ADELA. (R.) A month!

ALPHON. (L.) A month!—an eternity!

HAMMER. (C.) Repress—I implore you both—repress! When once I have formed a resolution, I never waver—never!

ADELA. Alphonse!

ALPHON. Jemima!—I mean Adela! (*they are about to embrace*)
—HAMMER prevents them)

HAMMER. I didn't say press—I said repress. Now, young man, far be it from me to be rude to a foreigner, but I should feel much obliged if you would—(*motions to C. door*)

ALPHON. Ah, I understand—abscond.

ADELA. But you'll come back again?

ALPHON. In the wave of a wand.

ADELA. In an hour?

ALPHON. What's o'clock? (HAMMER takes out watch—ALPHONSE about to take it)

HAMMER. (*holding watch at a distance*) Sir, this watch is not a lever.

ALPHON. All right, I see. Adieu, che'rie; adieu, aged but

respectable party; you wish me to disappear—voilà—presto! (*takes railway rug from chair at C. door, and holds it up before him*)

HAMMER. Going—going.

ALPHON. Gone! (*drops rug and exits quickly C. door, and then speaks*) No deception!

HAMMER. Well, there is no deception—he has gone. Now what do you say to that stroke of business?

ADELA. I say that you are a dear, good uncle; you were rather cross at first, to be sure; but, since you gave your consent at last, I forgive you.

HAMMER. Consent, indeed! I only wanted to get rid of him.

ADELA. Ah! cruel man!

HAMMER. Niece, I always knew you to be deficient in intellect, but I never thought to deplore a deficiency so lamentable. I shall *never* give my consent.

ADELA. Then, uncle, I shall do without it. If parents have flinty hearts, I know what to do. I haven't read novels for nothing.

HAMMER. The Will and the Way, Lady Audley's Secret—a pretty education I've paid for.

ADELA. You are a weak, silly old man, and don't know your own mind two minutes together. First you say I shall marry him, and then you say I shan't. Well, then, so much the worse for you.

HAMMER. Do you threaten me? Deluded maiden, I renounce you as a bad lot! I've done with you—marry him, and——

ADELA. Be happy ever afterwards.

Enter BECKY, C. door.

BECKY. (*down, L.*) Sir, sir! there's a fly from the station, just drove up to the door, with a lady and gentleman.

HAMMER. (*C.*) Inside?

BECKY. In course; you don't suppose they were outside on the roof.

HAMMER. My nephew, I dare say.

ADELA. (*R.*) My brother Edgar; now we shall see.

HAMMER. In all probability we shall see.

BECKY. This is what I call being taken on a plush.

HAMMER. Becky, allow me to correct you—at a non plus; but I am always prepared. Becky, where is my best coat? (*getting excited*) Becky, where the devil is my coat?

BECKY. You'll find your coat, &c., in apple-pie order in your room, dear Her—(*HAMMER stops her*) Dear Mr. Hammer. ¶

HAMMER. Thanks, Becky, I must make an impression on the fair stranger; intellect will do much, but outward appearance must not be utterly disregarded. *Exit, C. door.*

BECKY. (*aside*) Master Edgar's intended; so there's one of them got rid of. (*aloud*) Won't you be glad to see your brother's intended, his wife as is to be, miss?

ADELA. No.

BECKY. (*aside*) There's something wrong here.

ADELA. Uncle's in a desperate hurry to run after Edgar's intended, but pays very little attention to mine.

BECKY. Why, lor! Miss Hadderlah, you don't mean to say you've got an intended?

ADELA. Of course I have; isn't it quite natural?

BECKY. As natural as nature, and the publication of banns. Well, miss, I'll see what can be done for you.

ADELA. You don't mean to say you can help me, Becky!

BECKY. Who knows?

ADELA. Oh, my dear good Becky!

BECKY. Leave all to me, miss; I'll make your uncle give his consent; I know a receipt for cooking his goose, or my name is not Rebecca Groggins. (*aside*) Which I hope it'll soon be something else.

ADELA. Why, Becky, what will you do?

BECKY. Bless you, miss! I'm not a cook for nothink. I'll underdo his roasts, and overdo his boils, put pepper in his apple tart, and mustard in his custard, and if that won't do, I'll starve him out.

ADELA. How kind and considerate of you, Becky; but just now he's taken it into his head that Edgar is going to marry a princess at least.

BECKY. A princess, in one of old Spavins's ricketty flies? Don't tell me—it can't be!

ADELA. Certainly not.

BECKY. Hush! here they come—leave all to me, miss. (*BECKY gets up stage, R.*)

Enter HAMMER, leading ZEPHYRINA with much ceremony.

HAMMER. Enter, fair lady; deign to place your feet within my humble demesne. The premises are not extensive, but pleasantly situated in an agreeable locality, replete with every convenience, an excellent pump at hand.

BECKY. (*aside*) She won't be long before she finds that out.

ZEPHYR. (*L., looking round*) Yes, you seem very jolly here.

HAMMER. (*C., aside*) Jolly! (*aloud*) Yes, I have a fine flow of animal spirits.

ZEPHYR. (*looking round*) Comfortably furnished.

HAMMER. (*aside*) Why, she's taking an inventory.

ZEPHYR. And decidedly snug.

HAMMER. (*aside*) Snug! what does she mean by that? (*aloud*) I am grieved, madam—my lady—(*aside*) I wish I knew her

title. (*aloud*) I say I am grieved that we have not had time to make preparations for your reception.

ZEPHYR. Oh, don't put yourself out about me, old gentleman.

HAMMER. But my niece Adela, whom I have the honour to present to you, will see that your apartment is got ready.

ZEPHYR. (*looking through eye glass*) Your niece Adela?—Charming, charming!—would look first-rate as a sylphide.

HAMMER. Of course—yes, yes. (*aside*) What does she mean by a sylphide?

ZEPHYR. (*crosses to ADELA*) Embrace me, my child; we shall get on together, first rate—I can see with half an eye. (*aside*) Poor thing! shy—decidedly shy.

HAMMER. Adela, my child, see that the blue room is in order for—for—her ladyship. (*aside*) Why doesn't she declare her title?

ADELA. (*aside—going*) If that's aristocratic breeding, give me an artist.—What a difference with my Alphonse! Come, Becky. *Exit, R. door.*

BECKY. Yes, miss. (*aside—going*) I'll be just as good a fine lady as she, any day, see if I don't, when I'm Mrs. Hammer.

Exit, R. door.—at ADELA's exit, ZEPHYRINA sits on sofa.

HAMMER. It was very kind of you to notice that poor girl, my lady—madam—a—

ZEPHYR. Call me Zephyrina, old gentleman; no ceremony, I beg.

HAMMER. Well, then, since you are so condescending—Zephyrina. (*aside*) What a mouthful! I declare I'm blushing all over; I must be as red as a lobster, or pickled cabbage. (*aloud*) I was afraid you would not deign to notice my foolish niece.

ZEPHYR. Draw it mild, old gentleman, and a little clearer from the tap; in other words, expound.

HAMMER. Well, the foolish girl has fallen in love with a low creature—a—a—I'm ashamed to say it—

ZEPHYR. Go ahead, old gentleman.

HAMMER. Well, with a—a—(*makes pantomime as if playing with the cup and ball*)

ZEPHYR. Hey!

HAMMER. Who does this sort of thing. (*takes umbrella and attempts to balance it—ZEPHYRINA rises from sofa, and goes to HAMMER*)

ZEPHYR. Ah, I see!—an artist. Does he do anything in this style? (*takes umbrella from HAMMER, and uses it as a balancing pole during tight rope dancing*)

HAMMER. What exquisite grace! what enchanting elegance!

ZEPHYR. Well, never mind, old gentleman; a man's a man for all that.

HAMMER. What condescension! I expected to find you always on the high ropes.

ZEPHYR. Nonsense! we can't be at it *all* day.

HAMMER. But from your elevated position, you must surely look down—

ZEPHYR. Occasionally; but my head is never turned a bit the more for that.

HAMMER. What noble disinterested sentiment! But what will your illustrious relations say, when they see you make a spring through all conventional rules?

ZEPHYR. Oh! they are pretty used to springing in my family—ground and lofty.

HAMMER. (*aside*) Lofty I can understand; but what does she mean by ground?

Enter ADELA, followed by BECKY, R. door—BECKY stands up stage.

ADELA. (*down, R.*) The blue room is all ready.

ZEPHYR. (*C.*) Well, then, I'll just make a rapid change—take off my hat and mantle. (*crossing to door, R. 2 E.*) Come, dear, we'll have such a chatter, and you shall tell me all about your love affair.

ADELA. (*aside*) She certainly improves on acquaintance.

BECKY. (*examining the lace on ZEPHYRINA's mantle as she passes*) 'Taint real;—well, that's no business of mine.

ZEPHYR. Ta, ta, old gentleman! *Exit with ADELA, R. door.*

HAMMER. She's a tip-top lady of quality. What do you think of her, Becky?

BECKY. (*down, R.*) She's well trussed and garnished! So there's your nephew off your hands; but what's the use of that, when you won't let Miss Haddelah marry her choice? I may wait a long time before I'm Mrs. Hammer, at that rate!—it's all a cheat.

HAMMER. (*L.*) But I can't let her marry a vagabond. Somebody else will turn up.

BECKY. A swindle!

HAMMER. Becky! my good Becky—

BECKY. Don't Becky me!—it's a swindle—a breach of promise of marriage; and I'll have you up before the Wild judge.

HAMMER. Becky, you'll drive me mad! nonsense, Becky.

BECKY. I'm not going to be put off and on like a glove, whatever you may think. If you won't give Miss Haddelah your consent, and marry me, give me my month's wages and my carackter.

HAMMER. Becky, do you want to leave me?

BECKY. (*crying*) I thought to have remained for ever—to love and cherish you, and—and—dish you up all the delicacies of the season, and do for you all that I could.

HAMMER. Becky, what you say goes to my heart.

BECKY. (*crying*) You haven't got one, or you wouldn't thwart Miss Haddelah's love.

HAMMER. But, Becky, would you be aunt to a mountebank? I'm a philosopher, Becky, and—

BECKY. I'm a philosopher too, and think all things for the best. (*aside*) Or I shouldn't have accepted you.

HAMMER. But I don't want to part with you, Becky.

BECKY. (*aside*) He's coming round. (*aloud*) Poor Miss Haddelah, blighted like a bad potatoe! Oh, it's cruel! and I'm blighted like a tater, too—Oh, oh! (*cries very loud*)

HAMMER. Pray don't howl in that way, Becky. (*she cries louder*) There, there, I give in.

BECKY. (*aside*) I knew he would. (*aloud*) Oh, you're a dear good man!

HAMMER. Becky, I'm a man of intellect; you, Becky, are a woman, and—and I have my weaknesses. (*kisses her*)

Enter EDGAR suddenly, C. door.

EDGAR. (*up at C. door*) I beg pardon; I'm afraid I've made a mistake of the house.

HAMMER. Edgar! Oh, lor!

BECKY. (*R.*) The nevv'y! so much the better for me.

EDGAR. (*coming down, L.*) Don't mind me, uncle; I'll look another way.

HAMMER. Nonsense, sir! I was only whispering an order to my cook—a nice little delicate dish for your intended—a—a—rump steak and onions. Go along, Becky.

BECKY. Yes, sir. (*crosses to L.—aside*) If I ain't Mrs. Hammer after this, I'll be stewed, grilled, and biled to rags! *Exit, L.*

EDGAR. (*L.*) So, uncle, these are the tricks you are up to, eh? Oh, fie, fie!

HAMMER. Nonsense, boy; you don't know what you are talking about. Oh, here's your intended and your sister.

Enter ADELA and ZEPHYRINA, from R. door.

EDGAR. (*crossing to ADELA*) Ah, Adela! there you are; how grown and how pretty!

ADELA. (*R. C.*) Go along with you!

EDGAR. (*L. C.*) Why, I declare you are quite a woman!

HAMMER. (*L.*) Yes, and an obstinate one, too.

EDGAR. Why, what's the matter?

HAMMER. She positively insists on marrying—

ADELA. An artist, brother. Zephyrina approves of my choice.

HAMMER. No such thing! impossible! your brother will be indignant when he knows all; the blood of the Hammers rolls in his veins! he will never consent to your marrying a conjuror

EDGAR. What! Adela, come to my arms! (*embraces*) I knew there was always a sympathy between us—I approve of your choice.

HAMMER. What—without seeing him? Oh, fie, Edgar! you who are about to make such a brilliant match! a lady—I don't know her title—of an elevated sphere in life; of an ancient family, no doubt—

ZEPHYR. (*R.*) So ancient, that it is lost in the obscurity of ages.

HAMMER. Whose ancestral trunk—

ZEPHYR. (*aside*) Was left at the station. (*ZEPHYRINA and ADELA walk up stage conversing*)

HAMMER. Must have placed her in her present elevated position.

EDGAR. Oh, yes! high enough sometimes.

HAMMER. By-the-bye, you have never told me where you first saw your lovely bride; where did you meet?

EDGAR. We met—" 'twas in a crowd." It was one evening on a fine summer's night; I was surrounded by a brilliant throng, in the halls of dazzling light; I was imbibing the delicious night air, and a glass of gin sling—

HAMMER. A what?

EDGAR. A foreign beverage, uncle.—When above me, high in the air, stood the loveliest of women, simply attired in white and gold, with red shoes, crimson jacket, and a wreath of pink roses. I looked aloft, as I do now, and—

HAMMER. Well, where was she? at a window?

EDGAR. No.

HAMMER. On a church steeple?

EDGAR. Guess again.

HAMMER. In a balloon?

EDGAR. No.

HAMMER. Up a tree?

EDGAR. No, uncle, no.

HAMMER. Well, on a—on a—

EDGAR. Yes, yes—

HAMMER. I give it up.

EDGAR. Upon a rope, uncle.

HAMMER. Upon a rope!

ZEPHYR. (*down c.*) Yes, tight or slack—with or without balancing pole, varied with the astounding act of the flags, and concluding with a leap through the burning balloon of Etna, amidst the showers of Vesuvius. (*during this, she goes through tight rope business*) There you have my elevated position, old gentleman.

HAMMER. Stop, stop! my head spins—my eyes are dazzled with myriads of spangles flitting before them; I am confused with a vision of chalk—chalk on the rope—chalk on the feet—

chalk on the clown's face—chalk all over—chalk—chalk! support me, somebody!

ZEPHYR. (*offering support*) Lean on me, old gentleman.

HAMMER. (*retreating to L. corner*) Avaunt! I am the most deluded of uncles! Shade of my departed sister! here's a precious mess you have got me into. I've made a vow, and I must keep it—yet, no—it can't be! Edgar? (*crossing C.*)

EDGAR. (R. C.) Uncle, I love her.

HAMMER. (L. C.) Adela?

ADELA. (R.) I love him.

HAMMER. Rope dancer?

ZEPHYR. (L., *with extreme passion*) I love him!

HAMMER. Once more, Edgar.

EDGAR. She loves me.

ZEPHYR. } He loves me.

ADELA. }

HAMMER. Yes, and we love them, and they love us! (*very exasperated*) If you can do nothing better than conjugate the verb to love for the rest of your lives, I have done with you all—you're a bad lot! (*goes up and throws himself in chair, C.*)

ZEPHYR. Edgar, how is this? you promised me a low comedy uncle, and you produce me a melo-dramatic tyrant.

EDGAR. Zephyrina!

ZEPHYR. But no, my proud soul rebels! I will not be looked down upon; I—I who have been looked up to by thousands of admiring spectators. Farewell, Edgar! I return again to the arena of my triumphs! (*takes L. corner*)

EDGAR. Do you hear, uncle? have you the heart to tear us asunder? on my knees—(*kneels R. of HAMMER*)

Enter ALPHONSE, C. doors.

ALPHON. (*at door*) I think I've timed it.

ADELA. (*runs up and brings him down, R.*) Ah, Alphonse! 'tis the propitious moment—he yields—on our knees. (*they kneel*)

—ADELA next to EDGAR—ALPHONSE more to R.)

ALPHON. Aged, but respectable party, on my knees—

ZEPHYR. That voice!—oh!

ALPHON. That cry!—ah! (*starts up into R. corner*)

ZEPHYR. Joseph!

ALPHON. Jemima!

ZEPHYR. Not dead?

ALPHON. You alive?

ZEPHYR. You didn't burst in a balloon?

ALPHON. You were not smashed in a fall from a rope?

ZEPHYR. I had it from the best authority.

ALPHON. I read it in the papers.

ZEPHYR. Penny-a-liners! (*all this to be spoken rapidly*)

HAMMER. (C.) What's all this?

EDGAR. } (R. of HAMMER, *speaking across to*) You know
 and } ZEPHYRINA) each other?
 ADELA. } (*next to EDGAR, speaking to ALPHON*) }

HAMMER. This recognition is highly interesting, but, I am bound to say, perfectly incomprehensible. Who are you? (*to ZEPHYRINA*)

ZEPHYR. (L.) Alas!

HAMMER. Cousins? (*to ALPHONSE*)

ALPHON. (R.) Alas!

HAMMER. Brother and sister? (*looking from one to the other*)

ZEPHYR. Alas!

HAMMER. Husband and wife?

ZEPHYR. } You've said it precisely.

ALPHON. }

HAMMER. }

EDGAR. } Oh! (*HAMMER goes up a little*)

ADELA. }

ADELA. (*to ALPHONSE*) And you wanted to marry me, vile man!

EDGAR. (*to ZEPHYRINA*) And you accepted me, wretched woman!

ZEPHYR. I thought I was a widow.

ALPHON. So did I.

HAMMER. (*coming forward, L. C.*) I triumph!

EDGAR. Oh, my poor sister!

ADELA. Ah, my unhappy brother! (*they embrace*)

ZEPHYR. Joseph, since you are alive.

ALPHON. Jemima, since it can't be helped. (*ALPHONSE crosses to ZEPHYRINA—they embrace*)

HAMMER. (C.) And you are no foreigner?

ALPHON. (L. C.) Not a bit, old gentleman.

HAMMER. (*to EDGAR and ADELA*) Deluded children!

EDGAR. (R. C.) That's all very well, uncle; but I caught you kissing your cook.

HAMMER. It was a chaste salute. If I marry, it is because I have intellect, and listen to the dictates of reason, as a man of intellect ought to do.

EDGAR. Marry!

ADELA. (R.) What! you marry, uncle?

HAMMER. And as further concealment is useless, you shall see my bride elect. Becky, Becky!

Enter BECKY, C., smart cap, big bouquet—HAMMER goes up and leads her down, L. C.

My children, behold the future Mrs. Hammer!

ALPHON. (*next to BECKY*) What do I see? my aunt Rebecca Groggins!

BECKY. (L. C.) I'm done brown!

HAMMER. (R. C.) The aunt of a mountebank? Horror! What an escape!

BECKY. Hercules!

HAMMER. (*retreating*) I've done with you all—you are all an odd lot—a bad lot. My children, henceforth we must live in our own bosoms. (*they all three embrace—ADELA gets between EDGAR and HAMMER, leaving EDGAR R. corner*)

BECKY. I'll have damages for breach of promise, see if I don't.

ALPHON. (*between BECKY and ZEPHYRINA*) Come, Jemima, come, aunt, we will leave this aged, but far from respectable party, and again seek our fortunes in the loftiest regions of high art.

HAMMER. Go; I am merciful—I am generous; and when you send round the hat, I'll give a halfpenny. (ALPHONSE, BECKY, and ZEPHYRINA *move as if about to go*)

HAMMER. (*with a sudden exclamation*) Oh!

ALL. What's the matter?

HAMMER. A thought strikes me: we are actually going to wind up affairs without a marriage—such a thing was never heard of! but perhaps we may be pardoned a deviation from established rules; in fact, we only put ourselves up as "An Odd Lot." Will anybody bid for us as such? I think I saw a gentleman nod—thank you, sir—any *advance*?—thank you, ma'am. Going—going—gone!

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ddy Ashore			Bag Pickers of Paris	A Plain Cook
te Secrets			Who do they take me for! (moon	Peter the Great
erali			Bride of Lammer-	Uncle Tom's Cab
my			Out on the Sly	Wellington and
Day			Who's my Husband!	Waterloo
				The Gold Fand
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WAR TO THE KNIFE.

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June 10. 1865.*

Characters.

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Mr. H. W. MONTGOMERY.
JOHN BLUNT ... (*a Bristol Manufacturer*) ... Mr. F. DEWAR.
MR. NUBBLY (*of the Cosmopolitan Coal Emporium*)
Mr. J. CLARKE.
SHARPUS... (*a Detective*)..... Mr. TINDALE.
CAPTAIN THISTLETON (*unattached*) Mr. SIDNEY BANCROFT.
MRS. HARCOURT ... (*a Young Wife*) ... Miss FANNY JOSEPH.
MRS. DELACOUR ... (*a Young Widow*) ... Miss MARIE WILTON.
MRS. PENSON (*Mrs. Harcourt's Maid*) Miss LAVINE.
JANE TRIMMER (*Mrs. Delacour's Maid*) Miss BLANCHE WILTON.

Time.—THE PRESENT DAY.

Time in performance, 1 Hour and three Quarters.

WAR TO THE KNIFE.

ACT I.

BEFORE THE PARTY.

SCENE.—*An elegant Drawing Room, c., with open doors; doors, R. and L.*

MRS. HARCOURT *discovered seated, reading, L.*—PENSON *arranging furniture.*

MRS. HARCOURT. That'll do, Penson. If you go on altering and arranging for ever, you will never make the rooms larger.

PENSON. Well, ma'am, as a villa *is* but a villa, howsomever you arrange it—

MRS. H. Just so; then don't attempt impossibilities.

PENSON. (*coming down*) No, ma'am. Master's rather late: he's coming home in time for the party, I suppose, ma'am.?

MRS. H. What an absurd question, Penson! Why shouldn't your master come home?

PENSON. Beg pardon, ma'am; didn't mean any offence, I'm sure. Only master's been out so much lately that—

MRS. H. Penson, you forget yourself. Pray hold your tongue about matters that don't concern you: you should keep your place.

PENSON. (*aside*) Yes, I mean to do that, spite of everything.

MRS. H. Because I am more familiar with you than most mistresses, you should not presume! I certainly *do* talk a great deal to you, as I am—so much—so much—

PENSON. So much *alone*, ma'am.

MRS. H. Certainly not; I was not going to say that.

PENSON. I thought you were going to say that master being out so much, you naturally—

MRS. H. (*rises and comes down, R.*) Once for all, Penson, do *not* refer to that again.

PENSON. Seeing it's a sore point, ma'am, I'll be careful. What's that? I'm sure I hear the sound of a silk dress—an expensive silk, too. There's ten and sixpence a yard in every rustle.

Mrs. H. Oh! it's Mrs. Delacour; she said she'd come early.

Enter MRS. DELACOUR, C. door, dressed for the evening, with a light shawl thrown over her shoulders.

MRS. DELACOUR. Well, my dear, here I am you see, punctual as ever.

MRS. H. (*meeting her*) And radiant as ever, dear Mrs. Delacour.

MRS. D. Mrs. Delacour! Now, I declare if you call me by that odious name, I'll go away home this minute; you are perfectly well aware I was christened Emily, and why you should be continually reminding me of the great misfortune of my life, I can't divine.

MRS. H. Well, *Emily*, then.

PENSON. (*aside, looking at Mrs. Delacour's dress*) Oh! every bit ten and sixpence a yard. *Exit, L. C.*

MRS. D. How is it I find you all alone in your glory? (*sits, L.*)

MRS. H. Oh! Mr. Harcourt is out,—on business no doubt. (*sits, R.*)

MRS. D. Oh! of *course*; they're always on business. Poor dear Delacour was *always* out, and *always* on business.

MRS. H. He died a year after your marriage, did he not?

MRS. D. Yes, dear; leaving me a widow,—nothing more. Luckily, my property being settled on myself, he couldn't touch it. Ah! my dear, Time having softened the resentment I once bore him, I can now content myself by saying he was a sad brute!

MRS. H. Oh, Mrs. Delacour!

MRS. D. I can't play the hypocrite, dear. I was forced, a mere child, to marry him, and he tried his best to break my heart; but he didn't do it, dear—ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear no! It's wonderful what a deal hearts will endure—after marriage. It's rather odd your husband hasn't come in, isn't it?

MRS. H. (*eagerly*) Oh, no! he was engaged to dine out at a club to-day, I know.

MRS. D. Begun that already, eh?

MRS. H. Charley's been always accustomed to live well, and our cook's not accomplished, and so he—

MRS. D. Prefers splendid misery in Pall Mall to domestic bliss at Bayswater, eh? Oh, these husbands!

MRS. H. Yes, and he's "put up," as they call it, for one, and is sure to be elected.

MRS. D. Ha! which club is that?

MRS. H. I think they call it the "Clifford."

MRS. D. Oh, my dear, you don't say so! whose doing's that?

MRS. H. A gentleman with whom he has become acquainted lately—Captain Thistleton.

MRS. D. What, Dick Thistleton! (*they rise*) Oh, the monster, to lure a young married man from his home! I'll speak to him.

MRS. H. (R.) You know him then?

MRS. D. (L., *coquettishly*) Well, yes, I do—I've met him.

MRS. H. Come, now, I can see you know him very well.

MRS. D. Go along, my dear! But don't *you*?

MRS. H. No, I've never seen him.

MRS. D. I met him at Harrogate last year—met him a great deal. You know what watering places are. Society seems to fling aside its conventional reserve, and people revel for a short season in being natural. Folks get quite friendly and familiar until they come back to town with its gloom and its dismal propriety.

MRS. H. What's he like? handsome, Charley says.

MRS. D. Oh! he's well enough as men go.

MRS. H. Come, now, Madam Quibble, from your manner I suspect—

MRS. D. My dear, never suspect; always be certain, you'll find it'll save a world of trouble.

MRS. H. Then I'm certain you take an interest in Captain Thistleton. He's coming to-night.

MRS. D. I take an interest in him indeed! how utterly absurd! when do you think he'll come?

MRS. H. Oh, with Charley, no doubt.

MRS. D. (*looking at her watch, impatiently*) How very inconsiderate it is of your husband being so late. All alike!

MRS. H. Are they? was Mr. Delacour at all like—

MRS. D. (*quickly*) Dick Thistleton? not a bit! Delacour wasn't handsome, nor young, nor agreeable, not a good dancer, nor—

MRS. H. Nor everything delightful, which it is evident Captain Thistleton is.

MRS. D. Who said so, pray?

MRS. H. Nobody; only I don't suspect, you see, I make certain.

MRS. D. Upon my word, an apt pupil. (*crosses, R.*)

MRS. H. After all you've said I'm quite anxious to see this Admirable Crichton.

MRS. D. (R., *a little offended*) Indeed, my dear! pray remember you are a married wife.

MRS. H. Now you're jealous! I'm sure you're jealous.

MRS. D. Am I? (*laughing*) Well, perhaps I am just the least bit in the world; but there it's over now: I've only to look in your eyes, dear, to see that you are as simple and as honest as the light of day. (*they kiss*)

Enter PENSON, suddenly, door C.

PENSON. Them two are always kissing. How they will quarrel one of these days. Hem!—Please, ma'am, here's Mr. Nubbly; may he come in?

MRS. H. Oh, yes, Penson.

MRS. D. Yes, but wait till we've gone; we're just a little flurried—ain't we, dear?

MRS. H. No, *you* are; I declare I'm ashamed of you—ha, ha, ha!

MRS. D. Well, he *is* better looking than Delacour, dear, I admit. *(the LADIES go off, laughing, door R.)*

PENSON. How missus can keep such a light heart with the messages we get every day from the tradespeople, is a mystery to me. One would think the butcher's bill alone would cut her up. Well, it can't last long, but I'll stick to 'em till the smash comes. It's convenient, and it looks faithful. Walk in, Mr. Nubbly.

Enter NUBBLY, C.; he is dressed as a seedy hired waiter, with a moist expression of countenance suggestive of imbibing tendencies, his coat cuffs are too long for him, and he has a draggled-ended white necktie.

NUBB. (C.) I'm not a proud man, Mrs. Penson, but I do 'ate bein' kept standing in passages.

PENSON. (R.) You could 'ave waited a moment in the hall.

NUBB. Pre-aps so, but I 'ate 'alls: why should I be kept standing in the 'all? I ain't a humbyreller. No, nor yet a golosh—no, nor yet a brommyter!

PENSON. Well, it was only a moment.

NUBB. Oh, I'm awear of that. But when parties has a man-servant leave 'em sudden, and parties has to fall back as a body may say on other parties which goes out to oblige, the coal and greengrocery line being such parties' reg'ler business, such parties objects to being stood in 'alls;—or passages.

PENSON. Well; never mind this time.

NUBB. I go upon a reg'ler cistern of my own. When I comes out for too sooperintend on occasions like this, I make it a rule to be like the gentleman as was left on a deserted island, Mr. Alexander Simcox, "Monarch of all I surveys, from Chaney to Peru," that's my cistern.

PENSON. And quite right too.

NUBB. Everybody knows me—I don't go a hiding of my beak in the sand like the wild Pelliking of the woods—catch me at it: my name's painted over my shop; Nubbly is *my* name, coals is my profession; though hequal to tons on a hemergency, I do not despise the yumble 'undred—my motto is *Nil Desprandrum*, my politics is liberal, and my terms is cash. *Hen B.; hevennin parties hattended.*

PENSON. Ah, Mr. Nubbly, you must have put by a snug little fortune by this time—you see you're always in request, let alone the shop which does a good stroke of business, I'll be bound.

NUBB. Well, I don't complain, Mrs. P.—mine's a nervous business, though, what with the fluctuwaitions in coals, now hup and now down, and the "rumoured reappearance of disease in the tatur," as they says in the noospapers, and the hinauspicious weather, hoperating hunbeneficial on the light spring wan, which is always at the service of the public for 'Ampton Races, Hepsom, or hanythink helse, partaking of the nature of "houting," and then the haccumulation of bad debts, and a orror of 'olesome wedgetables becoming the fashion for fear of fat—my bed is *not* one of roses, Mrs. P.—I do assure you; it's a hoverflowing coal sack, and the sharpest hedged bits hupper-m. st.

PENSON. (*sighing*) Hah, Mr. Nubbly, I dare say you have your trials!

NUBB. Right you are, Mrs. P.; bad debts, now. Now, Mrs. P.—(*looking round*)

PENSON. (*aside*) There's a suspicious look in his eye. I've suspected it before; he admires me.

NUBB. Look here. (*getting towards her*) Nobody about, is there?

PENSON. (*aside*) He do admire me!

NUBB. This is reyther what I call a flighty neighbourhood.

PENSON. (*aside*) He's going to account for his abruptness. (*rather coquettishly*) I don't understand you, Mr. Nubbly.

NUBB. Well, parties come and go rather sudden. Here to-day and gone to-morrow. Can't trust 'em long.

PENSON. (*aside*) He's afraid of my being off, and him not able to come to the point. (*aloud*) Some parties are not so fickle, Mr. Nubbly.

NUBB. Glad to hear it. Now, *haunter noo*, Mrs. P., *haunter noo*, as our lively neighbours say.

PENSON. (*aside*) Lively neighbours! he means those noisy city people at Camellia Lodge.

NUBB. I want you to answer me a partickler question.

PENSON. (*aside*) It's coming.

NUBB. I don't want to press you, you know.

PENSON. Oh! don't be so over diffident.

NUBB. (*close to her*) Do you think your master means to pay his greengrocer's bill?

PENSON. (*after a pause, looking at him indignantly, then with contempt*) Is that all *you* wanted to say? (*aside*) I could choke with rage!

NUBB. (*aside*) She ain't a bit offended!

PENSON. I don't understand you, Mr. Nubbly.

NUBB. Ain't we innocent! Your master owes me a good deal. Hitema mounts hup, you know. Grass in the hearty spring is grass, I can tell you! Cucummuers comes 'eavy, and as for peas—no matter the price, you have 'em.

PENSON. Well, and what then?

NUBB. Well, you don't pay for them!

PENSON. But you put 'em down, don't you?

NUBB. Rather! But it strikes me that to pass one's existence in one hendless hoccupation of putting things down, and never taking nothing hup, is hanything but a paying purshoot.

PENSON. Well! master's a gentleman.

NUBB. Every hinch of him—from the sole of his boots to the crown of his 'ead!

PENSON. And if he contracts a bill——

NUBB. Don't call it *contracting*; mine's gone on a spreadin out! Honly see it!

PENSON. Oh! don't take a party up, Mr. Nubbly. (*crosses, L.*)

NUBB. No, I don't want to take him hup—I only want to jog his memory.

PENSON. What! when you've come to attend at a party?

NUBB. Certingly! on the quiet, of course; not afore his friends. I'm not going to introduce the greengrocery at a hinopportune moment. But I may manage it; for hinstance, when I'm 'anding him a hiece, I can whisper in his hear, "Money's very scarce; don't you find it so?" As a City gent, he'll take the yint.

PENSON. City gent! Master's not in the City indeed.

NUBB. Ain't he? Then what is he?

PENSON. What is he? Why, look at him.

NUBB. So I have. I see a smart-looking party with noo coat and waistcoat, different trousers every other day, noo gloves, noo 'at, noo everything; so I says "City."

PENSON. Then you're wrong.

NUBB. How does he get his living?

PENSON. He don't *get* it; it comes natural. Nature's stamped him gentleman, as anybody might see.

NUBB. Ah, Natur's in the yabit of stamping about a good deal more than she's any right to; now for instance, you're only a servant, but, lor' bless your 'art, you might be—— (*pinches her chin*)

Enter JOHN BLUNT, abruptly, at C. door—he is a homely looking man about forty, dressed in roughish clothes, and looks like a manufacturer not above his business.

BLUNT. (L.) Hem! (*looks from one to the other*)

PENSON. (R.) Lawks! who's he I wonder. *Exit L. C. door.*

NUBB. (R.—*aside*) Evidently the new footman as was expected.

BLUNT. (*aside*) Queer looking chap—one of those gentlefolks that like to come early shouldn't wonder. Perhaps he can tell me where cousin Clarry is?

NUBB. (*aside*) I'll impress this fellow; he's evidently from the country. (*to him, loftily*) 'Ow harr you?

BLUNT. (*aside*) Lord, how these cockneys do knock the language about. (*aloud*) Tidy, thank you kindly, how's yourself?

NUBB. (*aside*) Familler—too familler. (*aloud*) So you've come, have you?

BLUNT. Well, I believe there can be very little doubt as to that, ha, ha, ha!

NUBB. (*grimly*) Ha, ha! (*aside*) A doosid deal too familler. Hem! you seem provincial, John?

BLUNT. (*aside*) Got my name pat, anyhow. Yes, I'm from Bristol.

NUBB. Ha, you'll feel strange at first I dare say.

BLUNT. Yes, I always do in London. And I'm not expected either to-day.

NUBB. Oh, yes you har. Mrs. Harcourt 'll be here soon.

BLUNT. Bless her dear heart, how is she?

NUBB. (*horrified*) I tell you what it is, my friend; if you talk of Mrs. H. in that free and easy way you'll get into trouble.

BLUNT. What is Harcourt so uncommonly jealous, eh? (*pokes NUBBLY in the side*)

NUBB. Well, of all the himprance I ever—calls Mr. H. 'Arcourt!

BLUNT. But I didn't know I should come down upon 'em on a party night. I shall have to change my clothes of course.

NUBB. (*looking at them in contempt*) Yes, I should say you would. I'm afraid they won't fit you. (*aside*) The last fellow was a short 'un.

BLUNT. Oh, they fit me well enough.

NUBB. Then you've seen 'em?

BLUNT. Seen 'em? Yes. (*aside*) He's a strange chap, this!

NUBB. (*aside*) He hasn't lost much time in trying his livery on. Well you'd better go and put 'em on, as I shall want you to assist me. And look here, keep pretty quiet, hold your tongue, and you'll do.

BLUNT. I can't hold my tongue. If I'm dancing with a lass I must talk to her.

NUBB. (*aside*) Thinks he's in the servant's 'all. He's the free and easiest—

BLUNT. Ha, there she is, bless her! Get out of the way, man.

Pushes NUBBLY aside and rushes up to MRS. HARCOURT, who has entered, door R.. she seems delighted to see him, and kisses him affectionately,—NUBBLY stands transfixed looking on in horror.

BLUNT. (C.) What! my little Clarry: younger, brighter, prettier than ever!

MRS. H. (R.) And you, dear John, the same hearty, honest, kind fellow as of old! (BLUNT holds her out at arm's length, then shakes her hands heartily—they go up a little)

NUBB. (L.) My back's a hopening and a shutting simultaneous. What did he go to say he was a footman for—he's a nip-pocrit!

BLUNT. But introduce me to this gentleman, Clarry. I'd like to know his name: we've already had a chat.

MRS. H. Why, bless your innocent heart, John, that's Mr. Nubbly, who comes to wait.

BLUNT. What? ah! ha! ha! (laughs loudly, and wipes his eyes with his handkerchief)

NUBB. (aside) If I don't send my bill in to-morrow morning, first thing, and give my boy horders not to move hoff the mat till it's liquiddiated, my name is not Nubbly! Exit, door c.

MRS. H. Dear John, it's like a touch of old times seeing you.

BLUNT. (sighing) Ah, lass! don't talk of old times—well you were right to follow your own bent, my child, and Harcourt's a good fellow, a thorough good fellow—by the way, is he doing anything yet?

MRS. H. No, poor Charley; it's very sad, people are always saying they'll remember him, and—

BLUNT. And always forgetting him—ah, well, you've got a pretty place here!

MRS. H. Yes; cheap at a hundred and thirty pounds a year, isn't it?

BLUNT. Phew! a hundred and thirty pounds, why, Clarry girl, that's a long rent.

MRS. H. Well, we might have a cheaper house if we lived in some parts; but Charley can't live in a vulgar neighbourhood. He says it wouldn't be living—it would be only existing!

BLUNT. Ah, well, it's something to exist in these days!

MRS. H. But you must be dying of hunger; let me order you something—there's a paté, and some—

BLUNT. Nay, lass, I'd half a fowl and a dozen sandwiches at Swindon, and I can hold on till supper. You've got a party?

MRS. H. Oh yes, and a charming supper; Charley ordered it from Gunter's. We're obliged to give a party now and then, in order to keep Charley's friends in a good temper, otherwise they wouldn't remember him.

BLUNT. Oh, nobody'll forget him, so long as he gives 'em suppers from Gunter's. Isn't he at home?

Mrs. H. No, he's obliged to dine out a good deal just now. He's with Captain Thistleton, a gentleman who's been very kind to him—he's going to bring him here to-night, and do you

know, John, I'm quite dying to see him, for he's been so kind to Charley; lent him ever so—(*stops herself awkwardly, and looks down*)

BLUNT. (*seriously*) Lent him money, lass; does your husband accept alms of strangers?

MRS. H. Alms, cousin John!

BLUNT. Ay, Clarry, call it what you like, it comes to that. When a man has no income and no prospects, and yet gives parties and borrows money, he's doing what I call in my rough country way, next door to what's dishonest. If I snatch a penny bun from a cake shop counter, I'm a thief; if I order a grand supper from a confectioner's, and can't pay for it when the bill comes in, I'm a victim to pecuniary pressure. It's a longer phrase; but it don't express much more.

MRS. H. Oh, don't speak like that, John—I know Charley has expensive tastes; but—

BLUNT. (*aside*) Yes, yes, what am I preaching away to a bit of a girl for? I'll have a chat with Charles, and talk to his new friend, Captain Thistleton or Thistlewood, or whatever his name is.

MRS. DELACOUR *enters door, R. 2 E.*

MRS. H. Thistleton, John.

MRS. D. (R.) No scandal against Captain Thistleton I hope?

MRS. H. (C.) Oh no! This is my cousin John. Mrs. Delacour, John, a dear friend of mine. (*they bow*)

BLUNT. (L.) Delighted! (*bowing awkwardly*) Glad to see cousin Clarry has a dear friend. (*aside*) I like her face, and I believe in faces.

HARC. (*heard without*) Take them upstairs, will you?

MRS. H. Ha! there's Charley. Come along, John, and I'll show you to your room. We've kept a room for you, as you promised long ago to come and take us by surprise.

BLUNT. Thankee, lass. You'll excuse me, ma'am, but I must go and clean myself—couldn't appear at a party in this trim. (*MRS. HARCOURT passes him, leading him*)

MRS. H. Back again directly, dear!

BLUNT. (*aside*) Nice little woman that. Married?

MRS. H. Widow.

BLUNT. O-oh!

Exit with MRS. HARCOURT, R. 1 E.

MRS. D. I wonder if Captain Thistleton's come with Mr. Harcourt? Hah! (*sighs*) What's this? Palpitation? Why I haven't had palpitation since—since I last saw him.

HARC. (*without*) Come along.

MRS. D. He's come sure enough. (*turns up, R.*)

Enter HARCOURT and THISTLETON, L. C.

HARC. (R.) This is my den, Thistleton, a mere box as you see.

THISTLE. (L.) Charming! (*looking at the figure of MRS. DELACOUR*) Charming! Your wife, Harcourt?

MRS. D. Oh dear no, Captain Thistleton! (*turning*)

THISTLE. Gracious powers! Mrs. Delacour! (*shakes hands with her*)

HARC. Ha! you know each other? Capital! Then you can amuse yourselves whilst I go and find my wife.

Crosses, R., and exits, door R. 2 E.

THISTLE. This is a surprise.

MRS. D. Not an unpleasant one is it, most polite and constant of watering-place acquaintances?

THISTLE. Constant? come, I never knew where you lived!

MRS. D. And never cared to inquire—after all your fine speeches and promises.

THISTLE. Nay, believe me, my dear Mrs. Delacour—

MRS. D. Believe you? Yes, that's what I did, and you've shewn yourself worthy of belief, haven't you. (*aside*) Bother the man, how phlegmatic he is, and yet I know he cares for me. Why doesn't he speak out as he used to do?

THISTLE. If I'd imagined you cared to see me I'd have come long since. (*they sit, R. and L.*)

MRS. D. (R.) Now you want me to say all sorts of nonsensical flattering things, but I won't. You've seen enough of your intimate friend Mr. Thorogood, I'll warrant. After he came to Harrogate with his horses and display, nobody saw much of you. I think it would have been much better for him to have been managing his bank in Somersetshire or wherever it was.

THISTLE. (L.—*aside*) Yes, so will the depositors some day, I fancy. (*aloud*) I've seen nothing of Thorogood for an age.

MRS. D. No, you like new faces, don't you?

THISTLE. Well, I can't say I'm particularly partial to *old* ones. (*aside*) I always knew she was deuced fond of me, but it wouldn't do.

MRS. D. Wasn't aware you knew the Harcourts!

THISTLE. I've only known Harcourt a month or so. This is my first visit here.

MRS. D. You've never seen his wife, then?

THISTLE. Never.

MRS. D. Of course not! She told me just now, she had never seen you.

THISTLE. I *was* actually the subject of your conversation then, *was I?*

MRS. D. Yes! When women are together they talk about *such trifles*, you know.

THISTLE. Ha! ha! ha! Severe as ever, eh? (*they both rise and come down*)

MRS. D. (*coquettishly*) Come; I don't think you ever found me so very severe. (*aside*) He's positively making me angry; he's so diffident, and I *know* he's over head and ears in love with me all the time!

THISTLE. (*aside*) 'Pon my life, she's an attractive little creature! (*coming closer to her*) What mites of gloves you wear!

MRS. D. (*holding out her hand*) Oh, I don't know.

THISTLE. (*taking her hand*) Lilliputian to the last degree!

MRS. D. (*aside*) He's awkward about it—but he means admiration. If you've quite done with my hand——

THISTLE. Happy would be the man who could—happy would be the man who could——

HARCOURT. (*off, R.*) It's all right; they know each other.

MRS. D. (*aside, annoyed*) Bother these married people—they always pop upon one at the wrong time.

THISTLE. (*aside*) Lucky interruption, for I didn't know how to finish the sentence.

Enter HARCOURT and MRS. HARCOURT, R. 1 E., MRS. D. up R., HARCOURT, MRS. H. and CAPT. T., L.

HARCOURT. Allow me to introduce my wife, Thistleton. This is Captain Thistleton, my dear.

MRS. H. and THISTLETON *give a start, unperceived by*

HARCOURT, *who has turned up stage, to* MRS. D.

THISTLE. (L., *in an undertone, coldly, and severely*) This is a strange meeting. I thought you were abroad.

MRS. H. (R.) (*agitated, and evidently alarmed*) I hoped—I thought—never to meet you again.

HARCOURT *comes down with* MRS. D.

HARC. (R. C.) Quite a pleasant little *partie carré*. I'm glad I've got you here at last, Thistleton. It's strange that we should have been fast friends for some months now, and that you and my wife should have never met before this.

THISTLE. (L. C.) Certainly—we never have.

MRS. H. (R., *in a cold voice*) No—never.

MRS. D. (L.) Why, here comes Mr. Blunt, a perfect Adonis! (*aside*) If I could only make Thistleton jealous!

Enter BLUNT, door L. 2 E., *in evening dress*.

BLUNT. (C.) Yes, I'm ready for any amount of dancing now, and—What, (*seeing THISTLETON*) Dick! you here! That's well; why it's like old times. Don't you remember how you and Clarry here used to play together, sing duets, and make

B.

love, and how you used to call her your little wife, and how you used to quarrel, and I always made you kiss and make it up again, in those jolly days at Fernleigh?—when you and Dick gave us all such trouble.

HARC. (R.) What's this? and they appeared strangers! Clarry, Clarry!

MRS. D. (L., *with a pained look*) And he has deceived me, too. No, I have deceived myself!

BLUNT. (*looking at each in confusion*) Why, what—how—what—what on earth have I gone and done now?

(MRS. H.'s head is turned in shame from her husband, who is transfixed with surprise and doubt—MRS. DELACOUR with her hand pressed to her heart fixes her eyes on THISTLETON, who turns away—BLUNT, utterly bewildered, falls into chair C., and stares blankly around, as the act drop descends)

BLUNT.

MRS. H.

THISTLETON.

HARCOURT.

MRS. D.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

THE NEXT DAY.

SCENE.—*A Drawing Room; door, L. C.; doors, R. and L. 2 E.; a fire place with mantel-piece, R. 3 E.; a Davenport with writing materials and newspaper on it; a chair near it, R.; a couch on L.; a stool on R.; a small phial of medicine and wine glass on mantel piece, R.*

Enter JANE TRIMMER, followed by NUBBLY, C.—JANE pauses an instant before entering, and NUBBLY follows her a moment after.

JANE. Mr. Nubbly, it's venturesome; that's all I can say about it—it's venturesome.

NUBB. Nothink ventur' nothin' win was always a motter of mine, Jane. You say yourself that the old woman's out, and Mrs. Delacour too, an' I've got a heap of things to tell you.

JANE. (R.) There's a time for all things, Mr. Nubbly. Ever since you drove me and Mrs. Pension, Mrs. Harcourt's maid, to Hepping Forest last Easter in your spring van—

NUBB. (L.) I haven't been able to get your himage out of my art.

JANE. No, nor Mrs. Pension's neither.

NUBB. (*aside*) Oh, that's where the shoe pinches; (*aloud*) why I wouldn't have nothink to say to that stuck up party—not if she was actually a wallowin in 'ouse property.

JANE. Oh, you was a waiting there last night, and had many an opportunity of saying agreeable things, I've no doubt.

NUBB. I beg your pardon—Mrs. Penson was with her missus, who kept her room all the hevenink.

JANE. Law!

NUBB. Yes, and Mr. 'Arcourt, he wasn't hisself, and in fact heverythink was all nohow. There was periods during the hevenink, Jane, when I felt my account against the 'Arcourts, a hempty nothink. If it hadn't have bin' for a couple of bottles of sherry as I secured hearly quite providential, I could never have brought the affair to a successful hissue; has it was though the pianister was weakish, the party on the cornick was lovely, and has for the supper, well, I haven't been able to heat so much without feeling hill in the morning for a hage.

JANE. Oh, well, come, it wasn't so bad after all.

NUBB. But it was quite 'orrid to see Mr. 'Arcourt—you've seen the Poliar Bear at the Regency Park, Jane.

JANE. Often.

NUBB. He's tremenjous white, and tremenjous restless—so was 'Arcourt. It's a old belief of mine as there's a skillyton in hevery 'ouse.

JANE. (*with a slight shriek*) Don't say that, Mr. Nubbly. (*looking round nervously*).

NUBB. I sees a good deal of serciety, Jane—and I've come to the conclusion that serciety's a *smilin'* 'umbug; it laughs 'oller when the canker's a gnawring at its 'art.

JANE. (*horried*) Does it though.

NUBB. Quite correckt is the words, as Bob Smith says at 'ur club.

JANE. Do you belong to a club, Mr. Nubbly.

NUBB. Yes, Jane, the Hantediluvian Hantelopes; it's 'eld at e Naggs 'ead. Bob Smith's chairman, and I'm the *vice*.

JANE. So I should say.

NUBB. You should hear Bob talk; when he's had his third ss, Jane, his sentiments is lovely. It was only last Toosday, party as shall be nameless, come in with velvet hedging to his coat sleeves, and made hisself rayther prominent. Bob made a speech as a body may say *hat* 'im, and the hend of his speech, what they calls the *preparation* was most himpressive—"Appier far," says he, "is the yumble wayfarer a munchin' of his crust hunder a nedge, than the lordly indiwwiddle *pitch*es into Patty de Foregrass in the Gilded Saloon." Mr. and Mrs. Arcourt's got a skillyton—what's more, your missus has one too! (*seizing her arm*)

JANE. Oh, don't! *please* don't.

NUBB. I watched 'em all. Mrs. Delacour ain't 'appy.

JANE. Then she ought to be. She's got a snug little income, passes most of her time at friend's houses, except in the season, when she always comes here to Mrs. Medicott's. Though I do believe she's a little cut up at not seeing Captain Thistleton, who—

NUBB. (*starting*) Ha! ha! (*crosses, R.*) A long fellow with a hoverbearing haspect—the scoundrell!

JANE. Law, Mr. Nubbly; he's generally considered very imposing, and makes an impression on nearly everybody.

NUBB. He made an impression on *me*. I was handing him his coat—for he left almost directly he come, and he gave me a—I can't enter into particulars, but it 'urt.

JANE. Gracious! Mr. Nubbly!

NUBB. Then parties wondered I wasn't myself, attributing it to sherry negus, when it was hindignation, boiling hindignation, Jane!

MRS. DELACOUR. (*within*) This way, dear. There, you'll be better directly.

JANE. Missus! And she said she'd be out till late. Oh, Nubbly dear, you'll meet her on the stairs.

NUBB. Say, say I'm somebody else. No, but she knows *me*.

JANE. There, go in there for a minute. Then when she goes into her room, rush off like a *comet*.

NUBB. Well, but look 'ere, Jane. I don't like a hiding—

JANE. Like a hiding; no, who *does*.

NUB. There's that boy, 'Gustus, left all alone to mind the shop, he'll go pitching into the coals; I know he will. (*goes into room, L. 1 E.*)

JANE *stands uneasily before the door as* MRS. DELACOUR *enters C., leading* MRS. HARCOURT, *who is pale and agitated.*

MRS. D. How lucky that I drove up to the door, just as you were coming. There, dear, sit down. (*places her R. C.*) There, now don't tell me anything until you've had a glass of sherry—I've got a few bottles left of Delacour's particular; he was a bad husband, but he knew what *wine* was. No, you won't? (*shrugging her shoulders*) You can go, Jane.

JANE. Yes, ma'am. But—but—

MRS. D. Don't stand there "butting"; do as I tell you—go.

JANE. (*aside, going*) Nubbly was right—there *is* a skilly-ton. *Exit, L. C. door.*

MRS. D. It was rather awkward last night,—but, surely you *have explained.*

Mrs. H. Yes; but my husband is ~~so~~ *awfully* jealous—he

trusted me so implicitly; and now he'll listen to no explanation.

Mrs. D. Oh, these husbands! how unfair they are. The jealousy's to be all on one side; *we're* to be perfectly unmoved when we come across their old flames, but if they meet one of our little sparks—fizz! flash! there's a blow up in a moment! Still, we're the weaker sex, and should give in; it's always proper, and generally politic. Now, what is it, dear? *(sits on stool)*

Mrs. H. *(R.)* Last night, after all had been said, my husband spoke such bitter—bitter words to me; and this morning—I cannot repeat what he said.

Mrs. D. *(L.)* You can't expect unalloyed happiness, dear! Married life's like a grand dinner, which requires an occasional olive, in the course of the matrimonial menu. *(aside)* My year of wedded bliss was all olives, but they were anything but the emblems of peace in our case. *(aloud)* It will all blow over.

Mrs. H. *(proudly)* I beg your pardon; he insulted me cruelly! and—and we have parted.

Mrs. D. My dear! you don't mean to say you have left him? *(they rise)*

Mrs. H. How could I stay beneath a roof where I was no longer welcome; would you have me sue for pity to the man who spurned me from him in anger and contempt.

Mrs. D. *(uncomfortably)* Well, my dear—it's a—it's according to—hem! what cause *(looking nervously at her)* you've given him. *(aside)* I'm willing to advise her, but the counsel must know the whole truth from his client.

Mrs. H. I met this man some years ago, at Fernleigh—my uncle's house near Bristol—where Mr. Blunt too was a constant guest—I was a mere child, scarcely knew my own mind, and was foolish enough to enter into a correspondence with him, eventually I learnt his meanness—his utter worthlessness, and I demanded the return of my letters. He sent them *all*.

Mrs. D. *(pleased)* Yes.

Mrs. H. Except one.

Mrs. D. *(depressed)* Oh.

Mrs. H. I expostulated—threatened—implored, but to no purpose; he still retains that silly letter, full I am ashamed to say of girlish, romantic nonsense—full of—

Mrs. D. Yes, my dear, I know what they are; we see them quoted in the breach of promise cases, and marvellous comic capital the barristers make out of them.

Mrs. H. He declared he would never part with it until I married, and then that in revenge he would—

Mrs. D. I see; the coward!

Mrs. H. He said that I had used him cruelly, and that it

should be "War to the Knife" on his part. He's changed his name, having come into some property, so until he came last evening, I never suspected that my husband's newly-found friend was my bitterest foe, neither was he aware that I was married.

MRS. D. Well, my dear, there's one thing quite certain—you must go back to your husband. *(they rise)*

MRS. H. No, Mrs. Delacour, I cannot—I cannot.

MRS. D. Well, come in here and take your things off, and when you're a little calmer we'll see what's to be done. *(passes her over to door, R.)* There! there!

Exit MRS. HARCOURT *into room, R. 1 E.*
I must get that letter from him—how foolish of her to send them. As I once heard my dear old aunt Deb remark, "Say as much as you like, but write as little as possible."

Exit into room, R. 1 E.

NUBBLY *puts his head out from door L. 2 E.*

NUBB. If I wasn't naturally 'ard of 'earing and the wind hadn't whistled through that keyhole like a railway hengine, I might have caught something besides a cold in my yod. Howsomever, I did pick up a word 'ere and there: I heard Captain Thistledown's name, and it's very hevident to me, as Mrs. Arcourt and him—

JANE. *(without)* Yes, she's in here, sir.

NUBB. Oh, law! *(bobs down behind sofa, L., as JANE enters, showing in THISTLETON, C.)*

JANE. *(aside)* Poor Nubbly, he'll be on tender hooks.

THISTLE. Ha, in her room, I suppose. Well, I'm in no hurry *(yawns)*

JANE. *(R.)* I'll just tell her you're—

THISTLE. *(stopping her as she is going, R. 1 E.)* No, never mind, I like taking people by surprise. I say, I like taking people by surprise—*(suddenly kisses JANE)*—NUBBLY rises and shakes his fist at THISTLETON, giving at the same time a gurgle of rage and horror

JANE. Upon my word, what insolence. *(crosses, L.)* Indeed! Hem! Well, I never—*(flounces out, C.)*

THISTLE. *(sits, R.)* These late hours are killing me. *(takes out a pocket book from his side pocket and opens a letter)* All's going well—It's my last chance. If this fails me I'm lost—But it won't, it can't. He daren't play me false. It might transport me, but it would kill him, for I'd shoot him like a dog if he threw me over. There lies a very different letter from his—Mrs. Harcourt's precious little document. Ha! ha! times have changed my lady since those fleeting days at Fernleigh—but I'll keep my word—I'll keep my word.

NUBB. (*sneaking towards door, c.*) With what I sees, and what I've 'eard, a putting this and that together, and a droring my own conclusions, I've no 'esitation in settling in my hown mind, as there's something a going hon'—but I'll spoil your fine games, my friend—you'll rue the day you kicked me, Mr. Thistlegrove. "The man who raises his foot against a trembling greengrocer's unworthy the name of a British—" (*THISTLETON turns at this moment and NUBBLY exits very sharply*)

THISTLE. Well, I wish the little widow would appear, for I'm confoundedly low-spirited and dull this morning. (*rising—his back is turned towards the R. door, through which Mrs. DELACOUR enters*)

MRS. D. You'll be better soon, and—ah!—(*sees THISTLETON, and with a suddenness of action, shuts the door after her, turning the key*) Gracious! then you've found your way here at last.

THISTLE. (L.) You are not in one of your cordial moods this morning.

MRS. D. (R., *coldly*) I beg your pardon, Captain Thistleton; I am cordiality itself.

THISTLE. Ha! you disguise it capitally.

MRS. D. Women are allowed a little deception—it is one of the few unpleasant attributes permitted the weaker sex; with us it is simply a pardonable weakness—it is only in man that it appears mean, contemptible, and base!

THISTLE. (*aside*) I knew the scene last night would annoy her. (*aloud*) Well, you're not inclined to be bored by visitors, this morning, are you? I'll be off, shall I?

MRS. D. (*aside*) He mustn't go yet; and I don't see my way a bit. (*aloud, much more cordially*) There! you are at your old fiery ways; can't you see I've been annoyed. There, it's all over now.

THISTLE. That's all right! I can't wake up and explain matters. I know you're dying to hear all about my old flirtation with Clarry Greville—I beg her pardon—Harcourt; but I've been turning night into day so much, lately, that I feel in a chronic state of knock up. (*yawns*) Excuse me being so stupid, won't you?

MRS. D. Oh, I like to see you yourself. (*they sit R. and L.*) I, on the contrary, have not been able to sleep for some nights. I take sleeping draughts, and try all I can, but to no purpose. (*THISTLETON yawns*) I'd give anything to be able to indulge in one of those tremendous yawns.

THISTLE. (L.) You and Clarry seem fast friends; I suppose she has painted me in fine Rembrandtish colours, eh? I'm a remorseless wretch, and all that sort of thing.

MRS. D. (R.) Well, it's a pity you should harbour vengeance.

THISTLE. (*aside*) Ah, that's the letter—oh, all's fair in love and war, and this is *war*! Sweet is revenge, especially to—a-hem—jilted lovers; I've got an advantage, and I mean to keep it. (*involuntarily touches inside breast pocket of his coat*)

MRS. D. (*aside*) It's in that pocket. (*to him*) Why don't you put your feet up—here's a stool. There, that's how Delacour used to sit and doze, and it was such a comfort when he *did* doze—rest, weary warrior. (*as she passes behind him she gives an exclamation of hatred*)

THISTLE. How fond she is of me. (*aside*) You'd make a capital soldier's wife; I can sleep at a couple of minutes' notice at any time, and if you don't amuse me I shall drop off to a certainty.

MRS. D. (*at mantel piece, R. aside*) I wonder if Dr. Lennox has made this draught stronger, the last one didn't make me close my eyes.

THISTLE. (*turning his head*) What are you doing? medicine! ah, Neuralgia, I suppose, late hours and nerves. Used to call it face-ache when I was a boy—I've taken a perfect forest of quinine in my day.

MRS. D. But you never liked it—you always shrunk at the uninviting potion—warrior that you were.

THISTLE. Not a bit of it—I'd swallow the whole Pharmacopœia.

MRS. D. (R.) Indeed, would you? You soldiers are wonderfully brave in battle, of course. Do you know I've a theory about fighting; I don't think there *is* such a thing as cowardice.

THISTLE. I beg your pardon, there *is*.

MRS. D. Ah! you speak from experience.

THISTLE. Ah! smartness comes natural with you. Now, nothing in the world would make *me* smart.

MRS. D. (*aside*) We'll try the truth of that some day. (*aloud*) You for instance—you'd think nothing of leading a forlorn hope I've very little doubt, but as for a bottle of medicine like—like *that* for instance.

THISTLE. All I can say is put me to the test.

MRS. D. Then as the Pet Lamb says, "Drink, pretty creature, drink." (*holds the glass to him with a comical air of authority*)

THISTLE. (*takes it*) Here's to the health of the entire college of physicians, coupling with the toast the name of that distinguished practitioner. Doctor Emily Delacour. (*drinks and shudders*)—Drunk with anything but enthusiasm.

MRS. D. (*standing in the attitude of an after-dinner orator*) Mr. Chairman, my lords, and a—gentlemen—for the distinguished honor you have paid me, I a— (*breaking off suddenly*) Oh, by the way, those letters. Read the paper whilst I write

one or two notes I had forgotten, will you? (*pushes the newspaper into his hands and sits at Davenport, R.*)—THISTLETON *puts one foot on the stool, and languidly scans the paper—yawning occasionally.*

THISTLE. How I hate reading—wish I'd never been taught. What uninteresting stuff—"Mule twist is active"—is it. It's the first mule that ever *was*, I should say—"High water at London Bridge." Now, who on earth (*yawns*) cares about high water at—hum!

MRS. D. (*aside*) I wish he'd try the debates. *They'd* send him off. There's a column and a half of lively discussion upon turnpikes, that would soothe a dancing dervish to slumber.

THISTLE. (*who has dozed off gently*) What a good creature you are not to be offended with me. I'm horribly rude. (*a pause—yawns*) She's gone. (*nods*)

MRS. D. (*in a whisper*) And he's going. How still all is in this quiet old-fashioned square. Oh, it's at such moments as these, that one classes Babbage amongst the benefactors of mankind. (*goes on tiptoe towards him*) He is asleep.

(THISTLETON *raises his arm and murmurs*—MRS. DELACOUR *shrinks back, goes on tip toe to her own room, R. and turning key, beckons on MRS. HARCOURT*)

MRS. H. (*coming a little way out*) You've a visitor; I'd better—

MRS. D. It's Thistleton; he's fast asleep, there— (MRS. HARCOURT *shudders at seeing THISTLETON, and makes a movement towards door, C.*—MRS. D. *seriously, detaining her*)—I'm going to commit a crime!

MRS. H. (*alarmed*) What would you do?

MRS. D. Don't be alarmed; (*waves her back with her hand, indicating, she is not to advance far*) it's only theft! (*by this time she has advanced behind the easy chair on which he is reclining asleep, and after one or two ineffectual attempts takes a pocket-book from the side pocket of his coat*) There's the pocket-book.

MRS. H. Oh!

MRS. D. (*after drawing a long breath and passing her hand over her brow, suddenly nerves herself, and smiling bitterly*) He said himself that all was fair in love and in war—and this is war; so I shall take a leaf out of his book, and a letter at the same time. (*opens the book nervously*)

MRS. H. I hardly know what to say—I—

MRS. D. Then say nothing, and I promise you I never will. Ha! (*takes out a pink envelope*) That's it! I know your hand. Pink; as if the paper blushed at the part it had to play in

the sad business. Never mind the envelope—here—here's another we'll put in there. That's it; now he won't miss it. There! there! (*gives MRS. HARCOURT the letter, which she crushes, and hides in her dress. MRS. DELACOUR returns pocket-book to THISTLETON's pocket, having placed another letter in the pink envelope. Then almost sinks into MRS. HARCOURT's arms*)

MRS. H. I scarcely know what to think of this, Emily! I—

MRS. D. There's gratitude! That letter once seen by your husband's eyes, would be a perpetual blister to him. Fond, and faithful as you are—loving him with your whole heart—the recollection of those foolish lines, which he might read, would often cause him a bitter pang of wounded pride, when he remembered that you had once wasted words of love upon another.

MRS. H. Yes! yes! Emily; but—

MRS. D. Little as I cared for Delacour, when I one day found a mysterious letter in his dress-coat pocket, I went on as ferociously as if I had adored him. Take it, and leave me to bear all blame! And now go—go back to the husband you should never have dreamt of leaving. Tell him *all*, but don't show him the letter.

MRS. H. (*crossing*) I will go, dear Emily—I see my own blind folly now. It is not too late to repair the error—I will go and ask his pardon for my wicked display of temper, and (*is going up to C. doors, when HARCOURT enters suddenly with BLUNT—MRS. HARCOURT shrinks back surprised*)

HARC. The fellow was right—she is here.

BLUNT. And with that man.

HARC. Hah! (*moving towards him*)

MRS. H. (*interposing*) Stay, Charley—you mistake.

HARC. Mistake, madam! I can believe my eyes—you have come here to meet him.

BLUNT. (*to MRS. DELACOUR*) And at *your* house too!

MRS. D. Mr. Blunt!

BLUNT. Away—don't attempt any excuses—I have been deceived—Charley has been deceived—we've all been deceived (*aside*) Clarry, whom I loved like my own child; I'll go back to Bristol and break my heart.

NUBBLY and JANE at door.

BLUNT.

HARCOURT.

MRS. H.

(THISTLETON on couch)

MRS. D.

E.

(Picture)

L

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

THE FOLLOWING DAY.

SCENE.--*Apartment at Mr. Harcourt's.*

BLUNT *discovered at a table, R., with account books and files of tradesmen's bills on it*—MRS. DELACOUR *seated at small table, L.*

BLUNT. (*counting at a book*) Ninety-two, three, and eight's a hundred and one—a hundred and one—our friend has it a hundred and seven. Mr. Snape the butcher makes his bill come to six pounds more than I do, Mrs. D.

MRS. D. A butcher is but mortal, and may make mistakes.

BLUNT. Yes; takes care to make it in his own favour though.

MRS. D. You've undertaken an Herculean task, Mr. Blunt.

BLUNT. Well, it is better that I should look through Harcourt's affairs than the obliging gentlefolks in Basinghall-street. Having set his domestic matters square, we've only got to settle his pecuniary difficulties, and then he can start afresh. It was very sensible of you disclosing everything as you did. How much better it would be if people would always speak out at once. Now the whole business is explained, there's little enough in it. The fellow's a scoundrel, and I've always noticed that scoundrels—a—have a knack of—a—being scoundrelly. (*crossing to Mrs. D.*) You're a clever little woman, that's what you are. (*sits across a chair, looking at her*)

MRS. D. Oh, indeed! praise from Sir Hubert Stanley! (*bowing*)

BLUNT. Don't know the gentleman; one of your grand friends, I suppose. Now do you know before I saw you, I was always afraid of widows.

MRS. D. Indeed! why so?

BLUNT. Well, you know, they always seem to me to walk about with a pedestal, and whenever they're about to speak to a man they put it down and stand upon it.

MRS. D. Preparatory to putting *him* down and standing upon him, I suppose. Well, I assure you *I* haven't a pedestal. Ha, ha!

BLUNT. No, that's what I say; you're different from the others; in fact, you're different from any woman I—(*aside*) What the deuce am I saying? (*aloud*) I mean, you know, that—a—somehow—I don't exactly—that was an immense butcher's bill for a small family, wasn't it? (*aside*) I was obliged to fall back upon the butcher, for I'd come to a regular block.

MRS. D. I don't think you're altogether fair to us, Mr. Blunt.

BLUNT. (*aside*) I hope she's going to argue with me—shuts me up in a couple of seconds, and somehow it's quite pleasant

to be shut up by her. (*aloud*) Well, widows—especially widows who've had "brutes of husbands"—when they marry again balance matters by having their own way with number two.

MRS. D. Oh, come! you're a regular confirmed old bachelor, with all a bachelor's prejudices; you ought to have been married years ago.

BLUNT. (*sighs*) A man can never be fond of more than one woman.

MRS. D. One at a time, of course.

BLUNT. Eh!

MRS. D. But when that one woman prefers some one else, the rejected one should accept his destiny—and a—turn his eyes in another direction.

BLUNT. (*looking half aside at her, slyly—aside*) She talks like a book. (*aloud*) But after all, you must exercise prudence.

MRS. D. My dear Mr. Blunt! don't for goodness' sake attempt to mix up prudence with any matters of the heart—they're like green and yellow in a coloured dress; they don't harmonise. No! fall in love first, and try your best to be prudent afterwards!

BLUNT. Now, from experience, do you think that a second love can be a success?

MRS. D. And pray who told you that I'd ever had a first?

BLUNT. Oh, come now!

MRS. D. The man *I* would care to love must be a model.

BLUNT. Hah! we know what "women's model men" are,—long whiskers, a drawl, small talk to any amount, a sneer for everything hearty, and contempt for everything and everybody but themselves; a fine tailor's figure, (*rises*) and unlimited credit at the bank.

MRS. D. (*with enthusiasm, and rising*) Not so; I would have him manly, honest, and true, with an open hand to help his friend; with a generous honest voice, that told of a warm and kindly heart within. I wouldn't have him too young or too old, but at that ripe age when a man has learnt to know the world, and yet has not been soured by what he's seen; a man to whose guidance I could trust myself, well knowing that the path of life through which he'd lead me would be a safe and happy one.

BLUNT. (*R.*) Yes; and you have only just said that love and prudence don't assimilate, and here you are settling the exact sort of person you intend to fix your affections on in the most methodical fashion. (*sighs*) Such a man as you have pictured doesn't exist.

MRS. D. (*L., looking at him straight in the face*) Permit me to say, that I think he does. (*turns from him slowly, and up a little, looking at him*)

BLUNT. (*half to himself*) And if I had my choice, I'd marry a bright merry-hearted little woman with a sparkling eye, and a cheery laugh—a pleasant, blithesome little woman, that would light up my lonely home like a sunbeam. That's the wife for me.

MRS. D. (*a little nettled, coming down*) Is it. Then I think you'd find it uncommonly difficult to discover such a perfect creature.

BLUNT. Ha! ha! Permit me to say that I think I *shouldn't*. —(*aside*) I'd forgotten all about Harcourt and his bills. (*goes to table, R—MRS. DELACOUR sits L. as before*)

Enter PENSON, C.

PENSON. Please Sir, here's Mrs. Nubbly a going on anyhow—says he *will* come in.

Enter NUBBLY, C. pushing past PENSON—he is slightly intoxicated.

NUBB. Them's his words which he abides by. (*aside*) I hear there's a screw loose, and I'll have my money. (*stands, C., swaying unsteadily.*)

BLUNT. My dear Mrs. D., hadn't you better—

MRS. D. Oh, don't mind me. Delacour was generally *much* worse at this hour of the day.

NUBB. I am not aweer as to whom you're 'luding to, by the name of Delgore; I haven't the honor of his acquaintance, and I don't want to.

BLUNT. What's your business?

NUBB. The greengrocery; and heavenink parties hattended.

BLUNT. Well, this isn't an evening party.

NUBB. Ha! ha! Come, that ain't so bad. Vegetables is dull just now, and coals with me is slack; added to which, I'm remarkable short myself. My big brother William's a coming up to town to-morrow, and I've got to meet a heavy bill.

BLUNT. (*looking through the books*) Nubbly's a character.

NUBB. Yes, he has. Have you got anything to say agin' it?

MRS. D. I have, Mr. Nubbly. Considered in connection with figures it's defective.

NUBB. What is there agin' my figure? I ain't 'ulking, but I'm compac'.

MRS. D. You don't add up well.

NUBB. *Add up!* I was never add up in my life. I've had 'undreds pass through my hands.

MRS. D. Indeed!

BLUNT. Hundreds of coals. (NUBBLY *scowls*) There, there, Nubbly, don't look black, man!

NUBB. Can't help it, when you flings the coals in my face. (*aside*) He ain't so remarkable polished hisself.

JANE. Oh, don't! *please* don't.

NUBB. I watched 'em all. Mrs. Delacour ain't 'appy.

JANE. Then she ought to be. She's got a snug little income, passes most of her time at friend's houses, except in the season, when she always comes here to Mrs. Medlicott's. Though I do believe she's a little cut up at not seeing Captain Thistleton, who—

NUBB. (*starting*) Ha! ha! (*crosses, r.*) A long fellow with a hoverbearing haspect—the scoundrel!

JANE. Law, Mr. Nubbly; he's generally considered very imposing, and makes an impression on nearly everybody.

NUBB. He made an impression on *me*. I was handing him his coat—for he left almost directly he come, and he gave me a—I can't enter into particulars, but it 'urt.

JANE. Gracious! Mr. Nubbly!

NUBB. Then parties wondered I wasn't myself, attributing it to sherry negus, when it was hindignation, boiling hindignation, Jane!

MRS. DELACOUR. (*within*) This way, dear. There, you'll be better directly.

JANE. Missus! And she said she'd be out till late. Oh, Nubbly dear, you'll meet her on the stairs.

NUBB. Say, say I'm somebody else. No, but she knows *me*.

JANE. There, go in there for a minute. Then when she goes into her room, rush off like a *comet*.

NUBB. Well, but look 'ere, Jane. I don't like a hiding—

JANE. Like a hiding; no, who *does*.

NUB. There's that boy, 'Gustus, left all alone to mind the shop, he'll go pitching into the coals; I know he will. (*goes into room, l. 1 e.*)

JANE *stands uneasily before the door as* MRS. DELACOUR *enters c., leading* MRS. HARCOURT, *who is pale and agitated.*

MRS. D. How lucky that I drove up to the door, just as you were coming. There, dear, sit down. (*places her r. c.*) There, now don't tell me anything until you've had a glass of sherry—I've got a few bottles left of Delacour's particular; he was a bad husband, but he knew what *wine* was. No, you won't? (*shrugging her shoulders*) You can go, Jane.

JANE. Yes, ma'am. But—but—

MRS. D. Don't stand there "butting"; do as I tell you—go.

JANE. (*aside, going*) Nubbly was right—there *is* a skilley-
ton. *Exit, r. c. door.*

MRS. D. It was rather awkward last night,—but, surely you have explained.

MRS. H. Yes; but my husband is ~~so~~ *awfully* jealous—he

trusted me so implicitly; and now he'll listen to no explanation.

MRS. D. Oh, these husbands! how unfair they are. The jealousy's to be all on one side; *we're* to be perfectly unmoved when we come across their old flames, but if they meet one of our little sparks—fizz! flash! there's a blow up in a moment! Still, we're the weaker sex, and should give in; it's always proper, and generally politic. Now, what is it, dear? (*sits on stool*)

MRS. H. (R.) Last night, after all had *been*, my husband spoke such bitter—bitter words to me; and this morning—I cannot repeat what he said.

MRS. D. (L.) You can't expect unalloyed happiness, dear! Married life's like a grand dinner, which requires an occasional olive, in the course of the matrimonial menu. (*aside*) My year of wedded bliss was *all* olives, but they were anything but the emblems of *peace* in our case. (*aloud*) It will all blow over.

MRS. H. (*proudly*) I beg your pardon; he insulted me cruelly! and—and we have parted.

MRS. D. My dear! you don't mean to say you have left him? (*they rise*)

MRS. H. How could I stay beneath a roof where I was no longer welcome; would you have me sue for pity to the man who spurned me from him in anger and contempt.

MRS. D. (*uncomfortably*) Well, my dear—it's a—it's according to—hem! what *cause* (*looking nervously at her*) you've given him. (*aside*) I'm willing to advise her, but the counsel must know the whole truth from his client.

MRS. H. I met this man some years ago, at Fernleigh—my uncle's house near Bristol—where Mr. Blunt too was a constant guest—I was a mere child, scarcely knew my own mind, and was foolish enough to enter into a correspondence with him, eventually I learnt his meanness—his utter worthlessness, and I demanded the return of my letters. He sent them *all*.

MRS. D. (*pleased*) Yes.

MRS. H. Except *one*.

MRS. D. (*depressed*) Oh.

MRS. H. I expostulated—threatened—implored, but to no purpose; he still retains that silly letter, full I am ashamed to say of girlish, romantic nonsense—full of—

MRS. D. Yes, my dear, I know what they are; we see them quoted in the breach of promise cases, and marvellous comic capital the barristers make out of them.

MRS. H. He declared he would never part with it until I married, and then that in revenge he would—

MRS. D. I see; the coward!

MRS. H. He said that I had used him cruelly, and that it

should be "War to the Knife" on his part. He's changed his name, having come into some property, so until he came last evening, I never suspected that my husband's newly-found friend was my bitterest foe, neither was he aware that I was married.

MRS. D. Well, my dear, there's one thing quite certain—you must go back to your husband. *(they rise)*

MRS. H. No, Mrs. Delacour, I cannot—I cannot.

MRS. D. Well, come in here and take your things off, and when you're a little calmer we'll see what's to be done. *(passes her over to door, R.)* There! there!

Exit MRS. HARCOURT *into room, R. 1 E.*

I must get that letter from him—how foolish of her to send them. As I once heard my dear old aunt Deb remark, "Say as much as you like, but write as little as possible."

Exit into room, R. 1 E.

NUBBLY *puts his head out from door L. 2 E.*

NUBB. If I wasn't naturally 'ard of 'earing and the wind hadn't whistled through that keyhole like a railway hengine, I might have caught something besides a cold in my 'ead. Howsomever, I did pick up a word 'ere and there: I heard Captain Thistledown's name, and it's very hevident to me, as Mrs. Arcourt and him—

JANE. *(without)* Yes, she's in here, sir.

NUBB. Oh, law! *(bobs down behind sofa, L., as JANE enters, showing in THISTLETON, C.)*

JANE. *(aside)* Poor Nubbly, he'll be on tender hooks.

THISTLE. Ha, in her room, I suppose. Well, I'm in no hurry *(yawns)*

JANE. *(R.)* I'll just tell her you're—

THISTLE. *(stopping her as she is going, R. 1 E.)* No, never mind, I like taking people by surprise. I say, I like taking people by surprise—*(suddenly kisses JANE)*—NUBBLY *risés and shakes his fist at THISTLETON, giving at the same time a gurgle of rage and horror)*

JANE. Upon my word, what insolence. *(crosses, L.)* Indeed! Hem! Well, I never—*(flounces out, C.)*

THISTLE. *(sits, R.)* These late hours are killing me. *(takes out a pocket book from his side pocket and opens a letter)* All's going well—It's my last chance. If this fails me I'm lost—But it won't, it can't. He daren't play me false. It might transport me, but it would kill him, for I'd shoot him like a dog if he threw me over. There lies a very different letter from his—Mrs. Harcourt's precious little document. Ha! ha! *times have changed my lady since those fleeting days at Fernleigh—but I'll keep my word—I'll keep my word.*

NUBB. (*sneaking towards door, c.*) With what I sees, and what I've 'eard, a putting this and that together, and a droring my own conclusions, I've no 'esitation in settling in my hown mind, as there's something a going hon'!—but I'll spoil your fine games, my friend—you'll rue the day you kicked me, Mr. Thistlegrove. "The man who raises his foot against a trembling greengrocer's unworthy the name of a British——" (THISTLETON turns at this moment and NUBBLY exits very sharply)

THISTLE. Well, I wish the little widow would appear, for I'm confoundedly low-spirited and dull this morning. (*rising—his back is turned towards the R. door, through which Mrs. DELACOUR enters*)

MRS. D. You'll be better soon, and—ah!—(*sees THISTLETON, and with a suddenness of action, shuts the door after her, turning the key*) Gracious! then you've found your way here at last.

THISTLE. (L.) You are not in one of your cordial moods this morning.

MRS. D. (R., *coldly*) I beg your pardon, Captain Thistleton; I am cordiality itself.

THISTLE. Ha! you disguise it capitally.

MRS. D. Women are allowed a little deception—it is one of the few unpleasant attributes permitted the weaker sex; with us it is simply a pardonable weakness—it is only in *man* that it appears mean, contemptible, and base!

THISTLE. (*aside*) I knew the scene last night would annoy her. (*aloud*) Well, you're not inclined to be bored by visitors, this morning, are you? I'll be off, shall I?

MRS. D. (*aside*) He mustn't go yet; and I don't see my way a bit. (*aloud, much more cordially*) There! you are at your old fiery ways; can't you see I've been annoyed. There, it's all over now.

THISTLE. That's all right! I can't wake up and explain matters. I know you're dying to hear all about my old flirtation with Clarry Greville—I beg her pardon—Harcourt; but I've been turning night into day so much, lately, that I feel in a chronic state of knock up. (*yawns*) Excuse me being so stupid, won't you?

MRS. D. Oh, I like to see you *yourself*. (*they sit R. and L.*) I, on the contrary, have not been able to sleep for some nights. I take sleeping draughts, and try all I can, but to no purpose. (THISTLETON *yawns*) I'd give anything to be able to indulge in one of those tremendous yawns.

THISTLE. (L.) You and Clarry seem fast friends; I suppose she has painted me in fine Rembrandtish colours, eh? I'm a remorseless wretch, and all that sort of thing.

MRS. D. (R.) Well, it's a pity you should harbour vengeance.

MRS. D. (R. C.) Captain Thistleton, *you* are concerned in the wholesale robbery at the Bristol Bank.

BLUNT. (R.) What!

THISTLE. The woman's out of her senses.

BLUNT. My good creature!

THISTLE. What authority have you for this mad statement?

MRS. D. The best in the world. The authority of *this* letter, written by *Thorogood* himself to *you*, and which by *accident* has found its way into the wrong envelope.

THISTLE. (*involuntarily clutching at his pocket book—aside*) Destruction! It can't be—I—a— (*turning wildly to MRS. DELACOUR*) Give me that— (*he is about to rush and seize the letter, when BLUNT catches him in his strong grasp*)

BLUNT. (C.) Hold back, man! Dare to advance one step and I'll bring the colour back to your cowardly white face in a way you'll little fancy. Give me the letter. (*takes it*)

THISTLE. (*aside*) A moment's delay might be fatal. (*aloud*) This is an abominable plot; and I will no longer stay to listen to the insolent retaliation of spiteful women. (*turns to go off, and is met by SHARPUS, C., followed by NUBBLY*)

SHARPUS. Mr. Thistleton, I'm a detective officer!

THISTLE. Fellow!

SHARP. Don't resist, because I've assistance handy. Nabbs!

Another DETECTIVE enters at back quickly.

All right. You know the affair: Thorogood's voyage is unavoidably postponed. Now take matters like a gentleman, and we shan't want to make ourselves unpleasant.

THISTLE. Has that villain—

SHARP. Yes, yes. Thorogood's blown upon you, so be cool. (THISTLETON *crosses into L. corner*) Come, take everything quietly. (*aside*) That's what Thorogood's been doing. (*turns to NABBS to give him directions—NUBBLY comes down near THISTLETON, L.*)

NUBB. There was once a certain *small* party, where a certain tall kicked a certain *short* party, but—

SHARP. (*turning*) Here, you—be off! (*swings NUBBLY round to 2ND DETECTIVE*)

NABBS. Get out. (*swings him up stage where he plumps against PENSON*)

PENSON. Where are you a-coming? (*pushes him off*)

NUBB. (*à la Julius Cæsar, looking at PENSON*) As the gentleman observes in the Roman 'istry—"Et tu, Beauty!" O—oh! (*crushes his hat over his eyes and exits*)

MRS. D. (*to MRS. HARCOURT*) So the victory remains with us, dear, after all.

ACT 3.]

WAR TO THE KNIFE.

HARC. To-day all doubts and differences end.

MRS. H. Yes ; thanks to you, and you, kind generous friend.

BLUNT. To business and your wife you'll now attend ;

They'll both repay the trouble

MRS. D.

Very true.

There's one we can't repay.

BLUNT.

And that is——

MRS. D. (*takes his hand*)

You !

BLUNT. I ! There *is* a way—a very simple way.

It rests with *you*.

MRS. D.

Hem ! on some future day.

We'll talk about it. (*to audience*) In the meantime, here

Rests for our future all we have to fear.

Smile not unkindly on our little play,

But make our title a misnomer pray ;

For if you cheer, at once our terrors cease,

WAR TO THE KNIFE becomes a *lasting peace*.

MRS. D. BLUNT.

MRS. H.

SEARFUS.

HARCOURT.

TRUSTLE.

PERSON.

NAMES

a.

a.

Curtain.



MUDBOROUGH ELECTION!

A New and Original Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

WILLIAM BROUGH AND ANDREW HALLIDAY,

(Members of the Dramatic Authors' Society),

AUTHORS OF

*The Area Belle; The Census; A Shilling Day at the Great
Exhibition; The Pretty Horsebreaker; The Colleen Bawn
Settled at Last; A Valentine; The Wooden Spoon Maker;
An April Fool; My Heart's in the Highlands; The
Actors' Retreat; Doing Banting; Going to the
Dogs, Upstairs and Downstairs, &c., &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

THEATRICAL PUBLISHER,

LONDON.

MUDBOROUGH ELECTION.

*First performed at the Prince of Wales's Theatre,
(under the management of Miss Marie Wilton),
on the 13th day of July, 1865.*

Characters.

GROGGINS (*Landlord of the "Maggie
and Stump"*) Mr. E. DYAS.

POUNCER(*an Attorney*)..... Mr. H. W. MONTGOMERY.

TIPPER (*Chairman of the Buff
Committee*) Mr. HILL.

FIVER.....(*Chairman of the Blue
Committee*) Mr. BENNETT.

BOB VESKIT (*Waiter at the "Maggie
and Stump"*) Mr. HARRY COX.

JENNY..... (*the Waitress*) Miss BELLA GOODALL.

WIDOW WILDUCK Miss LAVINE.

FREE AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF
MUDBOROUGH...Messrs. JONES, BROWN, ROBINSON, & SMITH.

MODERN COSTUMES.

MUDBOROUGH ELECTION.

SCENE.—*Public room in the Magpie and Stump, in the Country Town of Mudborough—table in centre, chairs, &c., and at back a double lift, R. C.—doors, C. and L.*

Enter VESKIT, the waiter, and JENNY, talking, C.

JENNY. Oh, get alone with you, do, Mr. Veskit, and don't be after any of your nonsense.

VESKIT. Nonsense! why there's nothing else to be after here, but nonsense. I never see such a dull place. Here am I engaged as extra waiter for the election, with no wages only what I can get, and except a little boy that came into the bar to ask the right time, I haven't seen a customer since I've been here.

JENNY. And I was engaged to wait upon the parlour company, and the only customer I've seen was an old gentleman who wanted to look at *Bradshaw's Guide*, with a bottle nose and a blue umbrella.

VESKIT. And what did he take?

JENNY. Take! why he took about three quarters of an hour a-finding his place.

VESKIT. But didn't he call for anything?

JENNY. No; but he said he would call when he came back.

VESKIT. How much have you took since you've been here?

JENNY. 'Ave took tuppence. And what 'ave you took?

VESKIT. Well, I've took a bad sixpence and a cold in my head. I never see such a dead and alive place. What's the use of elections, except to do good to the public 'ouses?

JENNY. Ah! what indeed, Mr. Veskit; we might just as well have vote by ballast as once.

VESKIT. I've dusted the cheers until I've took nearly all the veneer off 'em. I've beeswaxed the tables until they're as sticky as catch-'em-alive-ohs. I've shifted the chimney ornaments from one side to the other. I've even stirred up the ornaments for your fire-stoves with the poker—all to make believe I'm busy. Come now, sit down, like a good girl, and pretend as you're a customer.

JENNY. *La*, Mr. Veskit, what's the use of that?

VESKIT. Do, now, just to keep my hand in.

(*she sits at table, and VESKIT stands beside her with duster over his arm*)

Pay mum?—Yes, mum.—What 'ave you 'ad mum?—Let me see. Turtle soup eight shilling, *paté de fois gras*—

JENNY. Lor', Mr. Vesket! what's a patty before grass?

VESKIT. Lor', don't you know. It's a very *recherché* French dish, my dear, what the aristocracy eats.

JENNY. Yes; but what is it made of?

VESKIT. Well, it's a goose's liver.

JENNY. And they call that patty before grass! Dear heart alive, where I come from they call it giblets.

VESKIT. Yes, but where I come from they call it *paté de foi gras*, and accordingly it fetches more money. Look here, my dear, if you ever go in for cookery, don't you call chops chops, and don't you call carrots carrots, but cut your chops fat near the neck, and call them "cotelettes," cut your carrots into little bits, and call them *à la jardinière*. You'll find it answer.

JENNY. Well, how much is my patty de what-you-call-it?

VESKIT. *Paté de foi gras*, mum, eighteen shillings, mum, sparkling 'ock tuppence, one pound four, bread one pun ten, cigars one pound twelve, *poulet à la Marengo* one eighteen, tripe and onions two pun two, *saumon à la Tartare*, haunch of venison, boiled mutton and capers, cheese, bottle of old port—say four fifteen.

JENNY. La! is it, though? well, it's cheap at the money. There, young man, take this five pound note, and keep the change for yourself. (*she gives him a bit of newspaper*)

VESKIT. (*aside*) What a delightful creature she is! and if it wasn't for the dread of that terrible widow Wilduck, whom in a moment of temporary embarrassment I promised to marry, and to whom I owe rent and washing, I would propose to her on the spot. (*to JENNY*) Thank ye, mum; allow me to receipt the bill. (*kisses her, when enter GROGGINS the landlord, and POUNCER the attorney, c.*)—VESKIT and JENNY begin dusting the tables and then exeunt, c.)

GROGGINS. I tell you, Pouncer, my boy, the borough is going to the very deuce! No opposition—no money being spent—no liquor going; and the respectable electors are all as sober as if the week was one long Sunday morning before the opening of the "houses."

POUNCER. My dear Mr. Groggins, it's always the way when there's no opposition. Will a horse gallop when he walks over the course?—not if he knows it. And so our members, having no one to oppose them, won't spend a penny—not they. No, *what's wanted to make them fork out, is an opposition candidate.*

GROG. That's it, Pouncer, my boy; but where are we to find an opposition candidate to set the money going and the taps a-flowing?

POUNC. (*producing printed placard*) What do you say to this?

GROG. (*reading*) "Jobbins for Mudborough!" Who's Jobbins?

POUNC. That's a question that will, no doubt, be asked by the electors, and we must be prepared to answer it. At present Jobbins is a phantom, an invention of my own.

GROG. Patented?

POUNC. And duly registered, like the rest of the phantoms. All we want is to alarm the present candidates, and the way to do that is to put up Jobbins. (*hangs up the printed bill*)

GROG. And also hang him out of the window. (*hangs bill out of the window*)

POUNC. There, if that doesn't stir up the town, nothing will! (*shouts outside, "Hurrah for Jobbins!"*) The free and independent electors sniff the coming contest, and are eager for the fray and the five pound notes.

GROG. Hark! I declare they are rushing into the bar for something to drink on the strength of it!

POUNC. Of course they are! only give the British constitution fair play, and its the thirstiest thing out. (*shouts outside, "Jobbins! Jobbins!"*)

GROG. They're calling Jobbins—where's our Jobbins; where are we to find a Jobbins?

POUNC. Where are we to find a Jobbins!

Enter VESKIT, C.

Why, here's your Jobbins—a new man in the place, nobody knows him; let's make a Jobbins of him!

VESKIT. (*to GROGINS*) Please, sir, there's a gentleman down stairs as asks if you would be so kind as to change a five pound note for him? He says the bank that it's on broke seven years ago, but as business is dull perhaps you wouldn't mind obliging him.

POUNC. Business dull—not at all, it only rests with you to make business as brisk as a bottle of Bass's ale in a booth at the races.

GROG. Will you do it?

VESKIT. Do what?

GROG. We want you to stand—

VESKIT. Well, I'm blessed if they aren't a shabby lot. I've taken nothing yet but a bad sixpence, and a cold in my head, and they expect me to stand something out of that.

POUNC. Well, Mr. Veskit!

VESKIT. (*aside*) I may as well spend the bad sixpence with

my employer for the good of the house. (*aloud*) Well, gents, give it a name!

GROG. Well, Jobbins!

VESKIT. Jobbins! I never heard of that liquor before, but I suppose it's the country name for Old Tom, or something of that sort. How will you have it, hot or cold, with or without?

POUNC. (*taking him up the stage and whispering to him*) One moment and I will explain.

GROG. (*aside*) What a head-piece Pouncer has got; nobody knows Veskit, and if we rig him out with a white hat and an eye-glass he'll look the Member of Parliament to the life.

VESKIT. (*coming down with POUNCER*) Oh! you want me to pretend to be somebody else. They couldn't have me up for forgery, could they?

POUNC. As your legal adviser, I can assure you they could not.

VESKIT. But what if they were to bring it in bigamy?

POUNC. Couldn't do it.

GROG. Impossible.

VESKIT. Couldn't they swear an *alibi* against me?

POUNC. Certainly not.

VESKIT. Sure?

POUNC. Quite sure.

VESKIT. Then I'm your man. Jobbins for Mudborough, or any other borough. Here you are!

GROG. Then just clap this white hat on your head, and stick this glass in your eye.

POUNC. And put on these Piccadilly weepers.

VESKIT. And does that make me fit for a Member of Parliament?

GROG. Of course it does. (*they dress him up with white hat, eye-glass, and false whiskers*)

POUNC. There you are, an M.P. every inch of you.

VESKIT. But what am I to do?

POUNC. Promise everything.

VESKIT. And perform nothing, which I take it is the whole duty of a Member of Parliament.

GROG. Exactly.

VESKIT. But, look here, what's to be my politics. I don't know whether I am a Whig or a Tory.

POUNC. Oh, that's no consequence.

GROG. Not the slightest.

VESKIT. Then it's much the same thing I suppose; so if they ask me, I'll say whichever you please, my pretty dears—you pay your money and you take your choice. (*cries outside of "Jobbins, Jobbins!"*)

VESKIT. The free and independent electors are eager for a sight of me. Naturally enough. They don't get such a candidate every day.

GROG. Come, Pouncer, my boy, let's go and bring the free and independents in to view the man of their choice.

POUNC. (to VESKIT) Don't be afraid of promises, mind.

VESKIT. Let me alone for that.

GROG. Come along, Pouncer. Jobbins for Mudborough!

POUNC. Jobbins for ever!

GROG. Hurrah!

Exeunt POUNCER and GROGGINS, L.

VESKIT. Oh, certainly Jobbins for Mudborough! Well, 'pon my word, I've dropped into a pretty thing. I suppose they'll stand something for it. It's worth a crown to walk about under this white castor, with a pane of glass in my eye. (*business with eye glass*) Confound the thing! I shall never be able to make it stick in without some putty. But what will be the end of all this, if they find out that I am not Jobbins? They will job me into the horsepond. Ah, here comes Jenny! 'pon my word, she's a very nice girl. Having nothing else to do, I proposed to her a few minutes ago, and she accepted me; but if she knew that I was going into Parliament she mightn't think so much of me—particularly if she were to find out that I'm already compromised with a remarkably fine, but fiery widow of the name of Wilduck, to whom I owe six weeks' rent and washing.

Enter JENNY, C.

JENNY. (*not recognizing VESKIT*) Oh, here's a customer at last. I wonder if he's going to order anything, or has only come in to look at *Bradshaw's Guide*, and steal a clay pipe when nobody's looking. (*to him*) What will you please to take, sir?

VESKIT. (*aside*) She doesn't know me! then I must be like a Member of Parliament. (*to her*) What will I take, young woman? why, I will take a *paté de fois gras*—a *cotelette à la jardinière*—a *poulet à la Marengo*—a bottle of sparkling Hock, and the change out of that five pound note. (*turning, and kissing her*)

JENNY. Lawks me! if it ain't Mr. Veskit dressed up for all the world like Guy Fawkes!

VESKIT. That shows, my dear, that you don't know your history, or you would never mistake a Member of Parliament for Guy Fawkes.

JENNY. A Member of Parliament, Mr. Veskit?

VESKIT. Veskit! no such thing, Jenny; my name is—
(*voices outside shouting "Jobbins, Jobbins!"*)

VESKIT. Exactly, as the *vox populi* correctly and enthusiastically observes, my name is Jobbins, and my principles the *Constitution* and no surrender!

JENNY. Oh, Mr. Veskit! I wish you wouldn't be a political character. It's a very bad sign when people have principles and wear false whiskers. (*voices outside, "Hurrah for Jobbins!"*)

VESKIT. Stand aside, my dear; here come my constituents—the free and independent electors of Mudborough. Here! don't hold on by the tail of my coat when I am addressing the electors: it ain't etiquette.

Enter GROGGINS and POUNCER, introducing ELECTORS., 6.

GROG. Free and independent electors of Mudborough, I have the honour to introduce to you the illustrious Jobbins. Illustrious Jobbins, I have the honour to introduce to you the free and independent electors of Mudborough.

POUNC. And I take the liberty of adding—Jobbins for ever!

ELECTORS. Hurrah! Jobbins for ever!

JOBBINS. (*mounting a chair and screwing his glass in his eye*) Electors of Mudborough, I thank you for the honour you have done me. This is the happiest moment of my life. Hem! If you—ah! do me the honour to return me to Parliament, I—ah—will endeavour to give satisfaction to the customers—I mean electors. My principles are no secret: I have long been known as a—

CUSTOMER IN BOX. Waiter!

VESKIT. Coming, sir. (*jumps from the chair, and is brought back by GROGGINS and POUNCER. The same business at every call of "Waiter!"*) I mean I have long been known as a faithful servant of the public.

ELECTORS. Hear! hear!

VESKIT. And, gentlemen, during my long career, as a servant of the public, I have endeavoured, most faithfully and most promptly, to serve the public. I am proud to say I have never turned a deaf ear to the call of—

CUSTOMER. (*impatiently*) Waiter!

VESKIT. Coming directly, sir. (*to ELECTORS*) I beg pardon, gentlemen; my anxiety to do my duty agitates me. I—ah—feel at this proud and delirious moment—which, as I have already observed, is the happiest moment of my life—I feel as if under the influence of—

CUSTOMER. A glass of brandy and water.

VESKIT. In a half a minute, sir. (*to ELECTORS*) Gentlemen, excuse me. What I mean is, that I go in for the constitution. There's nothing like a good constitution. If you have a good constitution you have a good appetite, and if you have a good appetite you can eat.

GROG. And drink.

VESKIT. As Mr. Groggins correctly observes—and drink—therefore I shall always vote for a good constitution, which is a thing as conduces to a good appetite and universal eating

and drinking throughout the land. Gentlemen, allow me to conclude in the words of the great Metropolis—"Pall Mall, cry Mary'bone fear it."

ELECTORS. Hurrah! Jobbins for Mudborough! Jobbins for ever. (*they raise VESKIT on their shoulders, and carry him in triumph from the room, L. door*)

POUNC. Capital, capital; it's succeeding admirably.

GROG. It's all very well to say succeeding; but Jobbins has taken them off to liquor at my bar, and I don't see who's going to pay for it!

POUNC. At such a crisis of the borough's destiny you surely wouldn't be particular on that p'int.

GROG. P'int!—they'll have quarts, gallons, and stick it up, notwithstanding that I have had wrote up over the bar in gold letters as large as life—"You are requested not to ask for credit, as a refusal often often offends."

Enter TIPPER, agent of the Buff Party, c.

TIPPER. Mr. Groggins, my dear Mr. Groggins, I perceive that a new and unexpected candidate is in the field. Who is Mr. Jobbins?

GROG. Who? Why, *the* Jobbins.

POUNC. Of course, the great Jobbins.

TIPPER. Then we must bestir ourselves, and spend money.

GROG. It's the best thing you can do. Mr. Jobbins is a tremendous fellow, and don't care what he spends.

TIPPER. In that case we must go to work in earnest—take committee rooms, and throw open the publics. What do you say, Mr. Groggins, to letting the Buffs have this room for their committee?

GROG. Well, you see, I've half promised to let Jobbins' committee have it—they've offered me six pounds a week.

TIPPER. Jobbins! Rather than he should have it the Buff Committee will give you ten.

Enter FIVER, c., agent of the Blue Committee.

FIVER. Fifteen on behalf of the Blue Committee!

TIPPER. I spoke first.

FIVER. But I spoke more to the purpose.

TIPPER. I'll make it fifteen.

GROG. Any advance on fifteen? Going—gone. It's your's Mr. Tipper.

FIVER. Confound it!—the best situation in the town. What am I to do?

GROG. Don't be down-hearted, Mr. Fiver; you'll find me perfectly impartial. You shall have the downstairs room at the same money.

FIVER. Very good, I'll have it; the ground-floor belongs to the Blues.

TIPPER. Yes; and the first floor belongs to the Buffs, so that we are just above you, as we always mean to be.

FIVER. Puppy.

TIPPER. Humbug.

FIVER. I'll fetch a bill that will astonish you.

TIPPER. And I'll fetch a poster that will annihilate you.

Exeunt TIPPER and FIVER, quarrelling, followed by GROGGINS and POUNCER, C.

Enter VESKIT, slightly elevated.

VESKIT. Hurrah! Capital thing this setting up for a member of Parliament; lots to drink and nothing to pay. Jolly fellows these electors; they swear they'll all plump for me, though what plumping means I haven't the slightest idea. And then they declare that they'll put me at the top of the poll. I hope they ain't going to shew me about the town like a Polar bear. My eyes, if I should get into Parliament in earnest, and have the making of my own laws! The first thing I'll do will be to make a law to do away with widows. It's positively horrible to think of the number of widows as is rampaging about the world, snapping at the heels of good-looking young fellows like myself, who can't pay their rent and washing. When widows go mad for a fellow they're worse than the dogs. I'll introduce a bill to have them all muzzled. Then every public-house shall be obliged to keep at least three waiters, with a pot-boy to do all the dirty work for them; and it shall be unlawful for every gent to offer a waiter less than a bob, or to expect any change out of half a sovereign.

Enter JENNY, crying, L.

JENNY. Oh, Veskit, do speak to me; oh, do, Mr. Veskit.

VESKIT. Jobbins, if you please, young person!

JENNY. Jobbins, nonsense! I thought Jobbins were a gentleman!

VESKIT. Well, I see no reason why you should alter that opinion.

JENNY. You're only having a lark with me, I know.

VESKIT. Young woman, persons in my present exalted position in life don't indulge in what you call larks with their inferiors.

JENNY. Oh, Mr. Veskit, is that the way you speak of me—me, as you have promised to make your wedded wife? I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Veskit!

VESKIT. Jobbins, I tell you, Jobbins!

JENNY. It's false, you were never Jobbins before!

VESKIT. No matter, I'm Jobbins, and as the electors say, "Jobbins for ever!"

JENNY. I see how it is—you are going to cry off the bargain. I was sure of it the moment I saw them whiskers. What can you expect but deception from a man as goes about with false hair?

VESKIT. Well, if it is false hair I don't hang it down my back like a horse's tail, as you women do.

JENNY. Veskit, you are a wretch!

VESKIT. Don't call me by that name, don't. Look here, as you know I don't want any bother about it, perhaps I shouldn't be elected, in that case I'll be a man to my word and marry you—(aside) unless the widow Wilduck should interpose as a just cause and impediment.

JENNY. (crying) Oh! oh! and to think that I might have staid in my own village and married the farrier as stands six foot two in his stockings.

VESKIT. Should, however, the *vox populi* call me to the House of Commons—

JENNY. Correction!

VESKIT. Commons!

JENNY. I say Correction!

VESKIT. And I say Commons! (voices outside, "Jobbins! Jobbins!") There, listen to the *vox populi*! don't detain me from my duties! You're a nice one, you are, to prevent a man getting on in life. (voices, "Jobbins! Jobbins!") My country calls—I come! (pushes her aside and goes to window, R.)

JENNY. I'll give master warning at once, and I'll go home to my own village, and I'll marry the farrier, who would make two of him. *Exit, crying, L.*

VESKIT. (at window) Gentlemen—

VOICES. (outside) Hurrah!

VESKIT. Free and independent electors of Mudborough—

VOICES. Hurrah!

VESKIT. Gentlemen, I repeat, this is the proudest moment of my life. May the wing of friendship never moult a feather! May the pilot who weathers the storm always nail his colours to the mast! (cheers) Gentlemen, you want a man to go into Parliament for you. Here you are, gents, here's the man for you. So now's your time; give your orders, gents; the waiter's in the room. (cheers) Gentlemen, I have no fear of success—in fact, I fear nothing and nobody— (WIDOW WILDUCK screams outside in the crowd) The Widow Wilduck, by all that's horrible! She has recognized me in spite of my whiskers, and is coming in search of me. How shall I escape her fangs? (runs to door) Too late! she's coming up the stairs. Hah! this lift-up-and-down, by which in humbler and calmer

moments I have transmitted the plain joint, and the flowry potatoe; the very thing! This will drop me into the room below, in which I can conceal myself until the widow retires. (*gets into lift*) Below! (*lift sinks with him, the other side of the lift coming up*)

Enter WIDOW WILDUCK, C.

WIDOW. Not here! It was at this window I saw him, and he can't have left the house. So, so, Mr. Veskit! a change of name, and a false beard! You're putting up for Parliament, are you? I'll Parliament you, if I get hold of you! I'm not going to be done out of a husband that's good-looking enough to walk out with on Sunday, and able-bodied enough to turn the mangle all the rest of the week. I'll search the house until I find him. No, Mr. Veskit, get into Parliament you may; but get out of marrying me you don't.

Enter TIPPER, C.

TIPPER. Confound that printer! I thought he never would have got that poster ready. (*seeing WIDOW*) I beg your pardon, madam, may I enquire what you want in this room?

WIDOW. I want my Veskit.

TIPPER. You have made a slight mistake, ma'am; this is not the pawnbroker's. I must trouble you to retire.

WIDOW. Oh, you needn't be so bounceable!

TIPPER. Go, ma'am, go! I'm busy. The three golden balls are higher up, and you'll find a convenient private entrance round the corner. Now go!

WIDOW. Oh, I'm a going!

Exit, C.

TIPPER. So, so, I've got the start of Fiver, I think. By all accounts this Jobbins is a dangerous opponent. However, I've got here a list of all the voters whom I can depend upon, and the price at which they are to be had. It's a list that I have taken years to get up. Wouldn't Fiver give a trifle to get hold of it. (*lays book on the shelf of the lift*) Now then to eclipse and obliterate Jobbins's posters. (*unfolds a large buff poster, "Yellowboy for Mudborough," with which he proceeds to cover Jobbins's bills—the lift works, TIPPER's book goes down, and VESKIT comes up on the other side*) What's that? (*turns round and sees VESKIT who has another book in his hand*) Where's my book gone? and you, sir, who the deuce are you?—where the devil did you come from, eh? (*collars him*)

VESKIT. Now then, let go, can't you! It really appears to me that the entire population of this borough, natives and settlers, male and female, are bent on chevying me. Now I don't like being chivied, and what's more, I won't be chivied—no, not for the softest seat in Parliament that ever was stuffed with fi'pun notes.

TIPPER. But how did it happen that you—

VESKIT. Well, it happened this way. I went down the shoot intending to take a short cut out of this house, but when I gets into the room below—

TIPPER. The room below! why, that's the Blue Committee's.

VESKIT. I found the door locked, and there was no escape that way. The committee had gone to the bar to liquor, leaving all their books and papers, and as I was interested in the election, I thought I would just take a peep to see how the opposition party was getting on; and I found this book, which contains full particulars of who's to be bribed, and what their price is.

TIPPER. You don't say so! Give me the book.

VESKIT. Give it to you! What for?

TIPPER. For any sum you like to ask—only let me have it.

VESKIT. Well, but I say, you know—

TIPPER. My dear sir, there's no time to stand on ceremony—give me the book, I tell you. (*seizes it, they struggle, and VESKIT sinks into a chair exhausted*)

VESKIT. This is contesting an election and no mistake.

TIPPER. So the scoundrel, Fiver, means to try bribery, does he? However, I've now got his whole scheme in my possession. By-the-bye, where's my book? Sir, I laid a book down here a minute ago.

VESKIT. Did you? then it went down the shoot as I came up.

TIPPER. Confound it. Then that fellow Fiver will get hold of it, and I'll be bound he is mean enough to take advantage of it.

VESKIT. Fiver! I suppose that's the fellow that was so nearly catching me down below. I had only just time to mount the lift as he made a grab at my coat-tails.

Enter FIVER, with Tipper's book—he collars VESKIT, C.

FIVER. So you sneak, I've caught you. What do you mean by breaking into a gentleman's private room, and stealing his memoranda. Give me my book.

TIPPER. And you give me mine.

FIVER. So, it's your doing, is it, you petty larceny Buff!

TIPPER. What do you mean by that, you miserable Blue?

VESKIT. That's right—go it, gents—fight it out between you. I'll do the looking on: it's easier. And if you ever catch me meddling with electioneering again, I'll give you leave to put me up for Colney Hatch.

TIPPER. After this exposure, sir, I presume you will withdraw your candidate.

FIVER. Certainly not.

TIPPER. Very well, sir; if we cut each other's throats in this way they'll elect Jobbins.

VESKIT. Eh—what's that? By Jove! they're going to make a Member of Parliament of me in earnest.

FIVER. Stay, sir: suppose we amalgamate against him.

TIPPER. Never.

VESKIT. (*aside*) I see a chance. (*aloud*) Stay, gents—if so be as Mr. Jobbins could be induced to resign, what amount might you be disposed to stand?

FIVER. Do you think it possible? My dear sir, if Jobbins will retire in favour of the Blues, he may name his own terms.

TIPPER. We know which side has the longest purse. Get Jobbins to resign in favour of the Buffs, and a blank cheque is at your service.

VESKIT. Done; with both, gents—a bargain—I agree.

TIPPER. You! Who the deuce are you?

FIVER. Yes; who the devil are you? Speak.

VESKIT. I—I'm Jobbins.

FIVER. You Jobbins!—my dear sir, a word with you. (*pulls him R.*)

TIPPER. No, you don't; I spoke first. Mr. Jobbins, allow me. (*pulls him L.*)

FIVER. Let go, I tell you.

TIPPER. I shall never leave go.

FIVER. No more shall I. (*pulls him about*)

VESKIT. Here, hold on gents. If you've got anything to offer, speak up; you needn't pull me in half, because that's a way of splitting the difference that I object to. I am quite willing to treat with either or both of you; and I think I should prefer treating with both. (*JOBBINS holds out his hand for money, to TIPPER*)

TIPPER. What! a candidate for Parliament, and take a bribe!

VESKIT. Lor', did you never hear of that before? How innocent you must be. Tip up.

TIPPER. (*handing him a bank note*) There! mind you retire in favour of the Buffs.

VESKIT. (*to FIVER*) Please remember the waiter, sir—I mean the opposition candidate.

FIVER. (*giving him bank note*) There! and mind you retire in favour of the Blues.

TIPPER. No; you promised me first—in favour of the Buffs.

FIVER. No—the Blues.

VESKIT. Gentlemen—gentlemen—

WIDOW. (*aside*) I know he's in the house, and find him I will.

VESKIT. That voice—the devil or the widow, which is precisely the same thing. I beg your pardon, gents, my constituents are calling for me. (*aside*) Oh, why did the late Wilduck die, and make his wife a widow. *Exit hurriedly, c.*

FIVER. But Mr. Jobbins, Mr. Jobbins—— *Exit after him.*

TIPPER. Hi!—stop thief!

Exit, running against the WIDOW, who enters.

WIDOW. Now then, stupid, where are you a shoving to? The rudeness of the people here is downright horrid. What can have become of my Veskit? This is his room, I know; and if I only wait, I shall catch him. Can I hide anywhere till he comes in? What's this? It looks like an empty cupboard. I'll hide here. *(gets into lift, which immediately descends)* Ah!—help!—murder!—it's a sinking with me. *(disappears)*

Enter VESKIT, out of breath—his coat torn—falls into a chair.

VESKIT. Oh, dear,—where shall I run—what shall I do? I don't know which is the worst, those election agents, who want to corrupt me with filthy lucre, or that widow, who wants to marry me. What do I hear? a footstep! 'Tis she! Eh, no, it's only Jenny.

Enter JENNY.

JENNY. Yes, it be only Jenny—only Jenny. Oh, Mr. Veskit, you are a false cruel man!

VESKIT. I'm not, Jenny—I ain't, indeed. Oh, if you only knew how I've been chived, you wouldn't go on a-worriting at me.

JENNY. I see what it is, you love another.

VESKIT. *(aside)* I hope she hasn't seen the widow! *(to her)* No, I assure you, Jenny, I love nobody but you; and, as a public character, let me add, my country.

JENNY. Oh, why don't you say at once that I am in the way—that you want to get rid of me?

VESKIT. *(aside)* She certainly *is* in the way just now, and I *do* want to get rid of her, for what with my country calling on one side, and the widow Wilduck rampaging after me on the other I'm likely to become a martyr in the cause of love and liberty. *(looking anxiously round)*

JENNY. Now come, do ye speak to me kindly, and say you will always love me and never leave me.

VESKIT. *(aside)* I feel remarkably like that gentleman in the Colleen Bawn, who had one sweetheart more than he knew what to do with.

JENNY. *(crying)* You want to break my heart, I know you do; and after all you promised me this morning before you took up with politics.

VESKIT. Don't cry, Jenny, dear, don't cry.

JENNY. Yes; do ye call me Jenny, it does me good like.

VESKIT. *(aside)* A diabolical idea! It won't hurt her, and it will give me a few minutes' start to dispose of the widow.

JENNY. Now, tell me what it's all about.

VESKIT. I will, Jenny; come here; give us a kiss. There, come this way, what I am going to tell you now is a secret. *(aside)* By Jove! there's the widow's step on the stairs, there is not a moment to be lost—further this way, Jenny! There! *(he embraces her, draws her towards the lift and suddenly pushes her in—JENNY screams, the lift works, and she disappears)* Saved! Saved! I breathe again! *(the WIDOW is suddenly shot up the other lift, counterbalanced by JENNY)* Ah, the devil!

WIDOW. What do I see, my Veskit—my own dear Veskit! *(jumps out of lift and embraces him)* You thought I was lost, but now we'll never part again.

VESKIT. *(breaking away)* Excuse me, ma'am, but public business of the most pressing importance—*(going)*

WIDOW. Not if I know it; I'll not lose sight of you again, I've had trouble enough to get hold of you, not to mention being sent up and down a spout like a bundle of clothes at the pawnbroker's.

VESKIT. How the late lamented Wilduck could have stood it all the years he did, I can't understand.

WIDOW. *(fondly)* But no—you wouldn't wish to desert your fond Maria; you won't leave her again, will you? Come, then, if you will have it—just one loving embrace. *(embraces him)*

VESKIT. I feel just like a rabbit in the arms of a boa constrictor.

Enter JENNY, speaking.

JENNY. What do you mean by treating me in such a shameful manner?

(seeing WIDOW embracing VESKIT) Eh? what! Didn't I say you loved another? Oh you wicked, cruel, heartless, base deceiver!

VESKIT. Jenny, dearest Jenny; strike, but hear—

JENNY. Don't dearest Jenny me!

WIDOW. Who is this forward and familiar person?

JENNY. I'm no more a person than you are, mum; though how he can stand by and see me insulted by an individual like you—

VESKIT. Don't, Jenny, don't excite her—she's dreadful when she's up.

WIDOW. Who do you call an indiwiddle?

JENNY. Ugh! and he disguising his wickedness under these sham whiskers! *(pulls whiskers off)*

VESKIT. But I assure you ladies both, circumstances—

WIDOW. And crowning his villainy with this white hat, which I daresay he hasn't paid for. *(knocks off his hat)*

JENNY. How dare you touch his hat!

WIDOW. And how dare you meddle with his whiskers!

VESKIT. No; but really, Jenny, Mrs. Wilduck—

WIDOW. I'll Jenny her!

JENNY. Wilduck, eh? Oh, that's your game, is it?

VESKIT. If you would only be calm, ladies—

JENNY. Calm! Didn't you assure me this morning, that I was the only woman you ever loved? (*pulling him round*)

VESKIT. I did; and I'll hold to it.

WIDOW. (*pulling him round*) You did? although you had already offered me marriage in discharge of your debt for board, lodging and washing.

VESKIT. True, I admit it. My poverty and not my will consented.

WIDOW. Monster!

JENNY. Base deceiver! } (*they pull him about*)

Enter GROGGINS, POUNCER, TIPPER, and FIVER, C.

POUNC. Holloa! what's all this?

GROG. It's playing the very deuce with the borough. Nobody knows who's to pay for anything.

FIVER. I only want to come to terms with the opposition.

TIPPER. Which you don't do, Mr. Fiver, as long as the Buffs have a balance at their bankers. All I want to know is where's Jobbins?

VESKIT. (*pointing to white hat and whiskers on the floor*) There, gents, lies the most important part of him; here stands the humble remainder.

TIPPER. The waiter!

VESKIT. At your service, sir.

FIVER. Then give me back the five pound note you obtained from me on false pretences.

TIPPER. And give me back the ten pound note you obtained from me.

VESKIT. Shan't! what I get I sticks to.

WIDOW. Then pay me my four pounds seventeen and nine pence.

VESKIT. There you are—a five pound note, earned in the service of my country; you may keep the change. (*gives Widow note*)

FIVER. (*making a snatch at it*) That's mine!

WIDOW. Oh, you wicked man, would you rob a poor widow?

TIPPER. Sir, you obtained that ten pound note from me on false pretences.

VESKIT. Not at all; I said Jobbins would resign, and Jobbins has resigned.

JENNY. Not me, I hope?

VESKIT. Certainly not; having healed the widow's broken

heart with a five pound note, henceforward I am yours without impediment. (*embraces her*)

FIVER. So the redoubtable candidate, our opponent, has collapsed? (*jeering GROGGINS and POUNCER, who are ashamed of themselves*)

VESKIT. Nothing of the sort. Though I drop the Jobbins, and leave you to walk over the course, there is a constituency here, (*indicating Audience*) whose votes and interest I shall always do my utmost to secure. Ladies and Gentlemen—the purpose of a play is to punish vice and reward virtue. There, in the form of four evil doers, (*pointing to GROGGINS, POUNCER, TIPPER and FIVER*) stands vice. Here, (*pointing to himself*) stands Virtue! (*slapping his waistcoat*) If I have your suffrages I shall only be too happy again and again to contest the “Mudborough Election.”

GROG. POUNC. WIDOW WILDUCK. VESKIT. JENNY FIVER. TIPPER.
R. L.

Curtain.

DOING MY UNCLE

An Original Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

ROPHINO LACY, Esq.

AUTHOR OF

CINDERELLA, FRA DIAVOLO, MAID OF JUDAH, ROBERT THE
DEVIL, LOVE IN WRINKLES, THE TWO FRIENDS, LOVE AND
REASON, THE BLIND SISTER, DOING FOR THE BEST,
THE HOUSE ON THE BRIDGE OF NOTRE DAME,
&c., &c., &c.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH
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NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON
PUBLISHERS
122, NASSAU STREET.

DOING MY UNCLE.

*First Performed at the New Royal Surrey Theatre, on
Saturday, 8th September, 1866.*

CHARACTERS.

TIMOTHY CRUSTY, Esq.	. . .	Mr. Maclean.
CHARLES HOPEFUL, (<i>his Nephew</i>)	. . .	Mr. A. Nelson.
JACK SIMMONS, (<i>a Lawyer's Clerk</i>)	. . .	Mr. Joseph Irving.
JESSIE HOPEFUL . . . . .	. . .	Miss Goodall.
SUSAN TUCKETT, (<i>a Milliner</i>)	. . .	Miss E. Webster.
GRIMY, (<i>Maid of all work</i>)	. . .	Mrs. M. Brookes.

Scene—London.

Costumes Modern, as Described.

DOING MY UNCLE.

SCENE I.—*Charles Hopeful's lodgings—A meanly furnished room—L. a square deal table and rush bottomed chair.—JESSIE is discovered seated L. of table, arranging and tying up several bunches of artificial flowers, which she places in a pasteboard box on the table.—CHARLES stands towards R. C. reading a newspaper which he holds spread out.—Door of entrance in C.*

CHARL. Yes, yes; there's no mistake about it; there's the name in full, and the right address.

JESSIE. (*whimpering*) Oh dear, oh dear; here's a pretty state of things!

CHARL. Now *don't* go on in that manner, Jessie; or you'll take away all my courage.

JESSIE. I can't help it. What *ever* shall we do? Oh, Charles—I never thought your uncle would go so far as this!

CHARL. He might have gone further, and got *married*, and that would have been much worse!

JESSIE. (*rising, and coming forward*) And here are *we* with the money all run out—and the rent running on! Are you sure you've read it right, Charles?

CHARL. (*handing her the paper*) See for yourself. There you have it, as plain as printer's ink can make it.

JESSIE. 'Tis too true. (*reading aloud*) "Wanted a house-keeper of agreeable appearance, and not under twenty years of age, to take the management of an elderly single gentleman's establishment. Apply personally, this day, to Mr. Timothy Crusty, Hollyhock Lodge, Bayswater."

CHARL. You see it's my uncle's name right enough.

JESSIE. Charles, you must go *directly*, and try once more to gain his forgiveness.

CHARL. How can I try, when he won't see me? Haven't all my letters been sent back unopened? Haven't *you* been refused admittance too, my poor little wife?

JESSIE. Oh, if I had known that your marrying me would have closed your uncle's heart against you, you should never have done so foolish a thing!

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TIPPER. My dear sir, there's no time to stand on ceremony—give me the book, I tell you. *(seizes it, they struggle, and VESKIT sinks into a chair exhausted)*

VESKIT. This is contesting an election and no mistake.

TIPPER. So the scoundrel, Fiver, means to try bribery, does he? However, I've now got his whole scheme in my possession. By-the-bye, where's my book? Sir, I laid a book down here a minute ago.

VESKIT. Did you? then it went down the shoot as I came up.

TIPPER. Confound it. Then that fellow Fiver will get hold of it, and I'll be bound he is mean enough to take advantage of it.

VESKIT. Fiver! I suppose that's the fellow that was so nearly catching me down below. I had only just time to mount the lift as he made a grab at my coat-tails.

Enter FIVER, with Tipper's book—he collars VESKIT, C.

FIVER. So you sneak, I've caught you. What do you mean by breaking into a gentleman's private room, and stealing his memoranda. Give me my book.

TIPPER. And you give me mine.

FIVER. So, it's your doing, is it, you petty larceny Buff!

TIPPER. What do you mean by that, you miserable Blue?

VESKIT. That's right—go it, gents—fight it out between you. I'll do the looking on: it's easier. And if you ever catch me meddling with electioneering again, I'll give you leave to put me up for Colney Hatch.

TIPPER. After this exposure, sir, I presume you will withdraw your candidate.

FIVER. Certainly not.

TIPPER. Very well, sir; if we cut each other's throats in this way they'll elect Jobbins.

finishing touch to a head-dress I'm going to carry home, and then ran upstairs to see what *ever* was the matter.

JESSIE. Oh dear, matter enough! you helped us out of *one* trouble, and now we've got into another.

CHARL. The old story, Susan. My terrible uncle has given us an electric shock.

SUSAN. What has he been doing?

JESSIE. Oh, something very shocking! That is he hasn't done it yet, but he's *going* to do it; so it's all the same.

CHARL. He has advertised for a housekeeper! a young creature of twenty! that's the man who blamed *me* for marrying an angel!

SUSAN. What a shameful old gentleman! And what do you mean to do?

CHARL. Why that's the very thing I was going to ask our friend Mr. Symmon's advice about.

SUSAN. Oh, John would be delighted, I'm sure, if he could only help in *any way* to reconcile you and your cruel old relation. You see, *my*, my husband that *is* to be, is never happy but when he's in hot water. Being in the law, you know, he's used to it; and I'm sure he'd write a *threatening* letter for you with all the pleasure in life, if you'd only ask him.

JESSIE. (*hastily*) Oh dear no! That wouldn't do at all!

CHARL. (*shaking his head*) I'm afraid such a proceeding would settle us at once!

SUSAN. Well, perhaps it *would* be better to try milder measures at first; so what d'ye say to taking out a commission of *Lunacy*? John says a great many do that, when their rich relations don't behave properly.

CHARL. 'Tisn't for his *money*, Susan, that I'm grieving.

JESSIE. No; 'tis to think that Mr. Crusty should look upon Charles henceforth as a stranger, and perhaps die without forgiving him, for the fault of having married me, (*beginning to sob, and putting handkerchief to her eyes*) which I'm very sorry for.

SUSAN. Don't take on so, dear! If marriage is a fault, it's a common one enough, I'm sure.

CHARL. (*huffed*) Oh, if Jessy is sorry that she married me—

SUSAN. No, no, she ain't.

CHARL. I can only say—

SUSAN. Now don't go on in that way, Mr. Hopeful! *Come, go give her a kiss and make it up; that's what John always does when—*(*stopping short*) *ahem!* I declare *I feel quite savage*, to think that your spiteful old—well

I won't call names, but I *should* like to give that old gentleman a good—*trimming*.

JESSIE. La, Susan!

SUSAN. Yes, and a *basting* besides!

CHARL. But how are we to get at him? Letters and messages, are of no avail.

SUSAN. I *wish* John was here! If anybody can see through a stone wall, he's the man to do it.

SYMM. (*popping in his head at c. door*) Who's that wishing for John?

SUSAN. (*clapping her hands joyfully*) Oh, come in, John! (*turning to Jessie and Charles*) Dear me, I beg pardon, I'm sure, for asking him in; but you see—I'm so used to have him running after me everywhere!

SYMM. (*entering*) Is the court sitting yet?

CHARL. (*shaking hands heartily with him*) Glad to see you, Mr. Symmons; you're the very man we want.

SYMM. Hope you'll excuse my freedom in popping in here; but the fact is—I found the door of Susan's room below locked, and the key gone.

SUSAN. (*with a significant nod*) Of course!

SYMM. Quite right. You and I have been accustomed, as yet, to live alone; and we both know how many keys fit one cupboard, particularly in furnished lodgings for single men.

CHARL. Ha, ha, Jack! *I've* had experience in that line.

SYMM. I've *profited* by mine, I can tell you. So, as I didn't want to leave *something* in the landlady's care, which I thought would be safer in anybody *else's*,—(*turning his back and shewing his coat pockets, from each of which sticks out a wine-bottle wrapped in coloured paper*) why, I made bold to step up to the second floor and make a safe conveyance of my personal effects. (*drawing out the bottles he goes to the table and sets them upon it*) Done before *lawful witnesses*, as the Act *di-rects*.

SUSAN. Good gracious, what *ever* has he got there! And where *ever* have you *been*, John, keeping us waiting for you so long?

SYMM. Waiting for *me*? Why, I'm twenty minutes before my time. What have I got there? Why, something prime. Where have I been? Why, everywhere to be sure! (*wiping his forehead with his handkerchief which he takes out of his hat*) I've had a famous tramp. In the first place, I've been after a cab for to-morrow, and secured a *first-rate* affair; one that'll hold us four nicely, with a *white horse* to show it's a wedding party, and a genteel driver that

wears gloves, and has promised not to smoke till we return from church. We shall do the thing in style, I promise you. (*rubbing his hands with glee*).

SUSAN. La, how he does run on!

SYMM. I believe you: I've been running on all the morning! When I had settled with cabby, I trudged back to the office to get my quarter's salary, and to ask for a three days' holiday at least—eh, Susan? We must do like the great nobs, and leave for our "country seat" after the ceremony!

SUSAN. Don't be so foolish, John!

SYMM. Foolish, indeed? Why, you'd be the first to complain if you found anything incomplete on your wedding day. I've done my best to provide everything necessary, and I hope you'll be satisfied. I've been to the grocer's, butcher's, fruiterer's, wine merchant's—

SUSAN. Wine?

SYMM. (*grandly*) Yes, ma'am, wine! (*pointing to the bottles*) There it is, two bottles of first-rate, generous, full-bodied, exhilarating—*currant wine*! Would you like to taste it? (*to CHARLES*.)

CHARL. No, no, Jack; keep it for to-morrow.

SYMM. Taste a glass, Mrs. Hopeful?

JESSIE. I'd rather not, Mr. Symmons.

SYMM. Won't you, Susan?

SUSAN. No, thankye.

SYMM. (*pressingly*) Only half a glass?

SUSAN. No, not a *thimbleful*.

SYMM. Ahem! that's a clincher!

CHARL. He's going to do it first-rate, Susan.

SUSAN. (*primly*) Our means will never stand it.

SYMM. (*grandly*) My means are my own till to-morrow, and I'll stand everything! (*to CHARLES*) You've promised to come, you know, Mr. Hopeful, to play father and give away the bride. To be sure you're rather young-looking for a respectable father, but then nobody notices the parents in these affairs.

CHARL. I'll do my best to *look* respectable, Jack.

SYMM. Thankye. That is friendly.

SUSAN (*to JESSIE*) And remember, you're to be bridesmaid, dear!

JESSIE (*smiling*) Yes, to hold your gloves while you put on the ring. I know all about it.

SYMM. The ring? Aha! I haven't forgotten that either. Here it is! Here's the little article, without which all our magnificent preparations would come to nothing.

CHARL. Try it on, Susan; perhaps it ain't your size.

SYMM. Oh, isn't it, though! It's *just* her size.

JESSIE. (*sentimentally*) Ah! she doesn't know yet what troubles that little circlet brings!

SYMM. I'm going to teach her. She'll find how many blessings lie in the small compass of the wedding-ring,

JESSIE. Heigho! I wish you joy, dear! There's one comfort for you—you've no relations to offend by marrying.

SUSAN. Heigho! I declare now I'm getting melancholy out of sympathy with your troubles, dear!

SYMM. Troubles? Who's got any troubles? (*looking at them*) Why—I say! now I look at ye all, your faces seem suddenly to have grown longer. There's something the matter, isn't there?

CHARL. Oh, nothing very particular, Jack. Only—some hopes that we were building up have got suddenly kicked down, that's all.

SYMM. Can't they be kicked *up* again? I'll lend you a foot with pleasure.

JESSIE. We've had a disagreeable *surprise*, Mr. Symmons.

SUSAN. We're in a mess, John, and you've got to get us out of it—d'ye hear?

SYMM. In a mess!

SUSAN. Nothing less.

CHARL. You may pretty well guess what *about*, when I tell you that a certain relative of mine—

SYMM. What, your crusty old uncle? Well, what's he been at *now*? Has he given his last kick?

CHARL. Worse, Jack, worse! What d'ye think he has gone and done?

SUSAN. *Advertised*, John—for a young woman to take care of him!

SYMM. What? Well, that *is* sharp practice. Why he must be "*non compos*"! A young woman take care of *him*! what a wild idea!

JESSIE. (*poutingly*) I think a wife isn't a bit worse than a housekeeper.

SYMM. It's the way with old bachelors, ma'am—they generally do come to that at last.

SUSAN (*sharply*) But he mustn't come to that *at all*! You must prevent it.

SYMM. (*staring at her*) I?

SUSAN. Yes! you're in the law! and know how to frighten people! So, think of something di-rectly—that

shall upset the old gentleman's plans, and himself into the bargain.

SYMM. That's very easily *said*—but how is it to be *done*?

SUSAN. Try! A single *stitch* sometimes,—does wonders!

SYMM. I can't bring an action of assault and battery against him, can I? I can't say to a man you shan't—if he says he *will*? And besides, there's no time! your uncle's advertisement is very like a jar of treacle, it catches the flies uncommonly quick!

SUSAN. (*bridling*) So—you mean to give it up, John, do you?

SYMM. Don't be cross, my duck! I'll try what I can do between this and to-morrow.

SUSAN. To-morrow? You won't have time to do anything to-morrow. (*holding up her finger towards him, and dictatorially*) I'll give you just *twenty minutes*, to hit upon something clever,—while I and Mrs. Hopeful take our work home; and—if by the time I come back—

SYMM. Zounds, Susan, don't look at me in that manner!

SUSAN. You haven't concocted a plan,—then it isn't so *certain* that you take me to church to-morrow?

SYMM. What!

SUSAN. (*turning away, and to JESSIE*) Come, dear, let us go. (*JESSIE puts on her bonnet and shawl and takes up the flower box*)

SYMM. Here's a go!

CHARL. Stop, stop, Susan, this mustn't be—I can't allow—

SYMM. Oh, bless you, don't mind *me*, I'm used to her little ways. Look here, Susan! The inspiration's coming already—I feel it boiling within; but if you throw cold water upon it—*fizz* will go the steam, and it'll all end in smoke.

SUSAN. (*waving her hand grandly*) I don't care for smoke, or an explosion either!

SYMM. Well then, as the American scholars say, “we'll go the whole hog.” Let me walk part of the way with you, and I'll explain my ideas to you.

SUSAN. I don't want you.

SYMM. Yes, you do—you can't do without me; so you shall carry me with you, and I'll carry the bandbox. (*running to the table he snatches up the bandbox and puts it sideways under his arm.*)

SUSAN. (*with a scream*) Ha! put it down directly. *Turning it topsy-turvy in that way, you'll crush it to bits!*

SYMM. (*letting it fall*) Crush it! What's inside—not a baby?

JESSIE. A baby! Dear me, Mr. Symmons, d'ye think a bandbox a fit cradle for a baby?

SYMM. How should I know? I've no experience in such commodities. There's nothing about babies in "Coke upon Lyttelton."

CHARL. Oh, Jack, what a deal you've got to learn yet!

SUSAN. (*who has knelt down and opened the box, taking out of it an elegant straw hat, showily trimmed with feathers, and holding it up*) The loveliest hat that ever was seen in Paris or London! I trimmed it myself, and it's so becoming! It's ordered for a lady, a widow, just out of mourning for her second husband. (*rising from her knees*).

SYMM. And she's "going round with the hat" to beg for a third one.

SUSAN. (*putting it on*) Isn't there something captivating in it? (*with a smile at CHARLES and SYMMONS*)

CHARL. (*with a facetious bow*) Decidedly—just at this moment.

SYMM. Doesn't she look pretty in it? Oh, you angel! You are an angel, with your wings growing out of your head! I say, Susan, wouldn't it do for to-morrow?

SUSAN. Well, I'm sure! just like your impudence! (*snatching up the bandbox she goes to the table and replaces the hat, closing the bandbox again*)

SYMM. Come, don't flounce out again, there's a dear! It would carry us off with flying colours to-morrow. And how it would read in the "Morning Post."

SUSAN. The "Morning Post!" Why you never—

SYMM. Shan't I, though? Stop till you read it—"Married yesterday, John Symmons, Esquire, of Symmond's Inn, to Miss Susan Tuckit, fashionable mo-deeste."

SUSAN. John, I won't be called mod-eeste.

SYMM. Won't you? Ah, that's because you're mod-est, and that'll be all the better for me.

SUSAN. (*taking up her bandbox*) Now then, I'm gone. And, Mr. Symmons, remember what I've told you! (*going away with JESSIE, C. D.*)

SYMM. (*suddenly rushing forward to C. and striking an attitude*) Stop! attention, all of ye! I've got it! I've got it!

SUSAN. (*returning*) Got what?

CHARL. (*rubbing his hands*) Now, Jack!

JESSIE. (*eagerly*) The plan, Mr. Symmons?

SYMM. Yes! (*pointing to the bandbox*) The hat has done

it! The day's won! I'm ready to go in now, and (*snap-
ping his fingers*) settle my uncle!

JESSIE. You're sure of it, Mr. Symmons?

SYMM. Certain, ma'am!

SUSAN. And how will you do it?

SYMM. Never you mind. Leave it all to me; only promise to follow my directions, and you'll find yourselves popping in at your uncle's before he expects you.

CHARL. If you can do *that*, Jack—

SUSAN. Oh, he can do anything he likes, if he's a mind to it.

SYMM. You're right, Susan. And now to work. Listen! First of all, we must keep the *house* against the house-keepers, that's the *first* thing to do. You, Charles, be off and reconnoitre the premises. Make yourself the "board to keep off trespassers."

CHARL. (*taking up his hat, buttoning up his coat hurriedly*) I will. My uncle's maid of all-work is a good friend of mine, and will stand by us tooth and nail.

SYMM. What, Grimy? I know the girl. You're a prime favourite of hers, so go along and make love to her till I come. (*he pushes CHARLES out, c. d.*) And now, let me gather my two little goslings under my wings. (*taking one under each arm*)

SUSAN. (*smiling*) I didn't know you were a gander, John.

SYMM. (*playfully, shaking his finger at her*) You shall find a gander is a fit mate for a goose. But come along down stairs and help me to arrange the conspiracy against Mr. Timothy Crusty, of Hollyhock Lodge.

JESSY. I'm so frightened!

SYMM. Pooh; be yourself, Mrs. *Hopeful*, and don't be nervous! There's no harm in doing your uncle for his good as well as your own. So come along, my little volunteers, we'll catch the old cock at breakfast and give it him hot. (*Exeunt c. d.*)

SCENE II.—*The parlour in Crusty's house. Bayswater, very handsomely furnished.—French window, in c., opening on the garden. Door of entrance, L.—A small table laid for breakfast, towards R., at which CRUSTY is seated in an easy chair, his left leg wrapped in flannels and resting on a footstool—A bottle and wine glass on a little round table, on his R.*

CRUSTY. (*reading a letter*) So! Another letter from my scamp of a nephew, begging forgiveness; I suppose he

thinks I'm tired of living alone, and ready to forgive him his run-away marriage. He's very much mistaken! No, no, Master Charles—neither you nor your wife ever set foot in *my* house, I promise you. The *pains* I took—instilling into that young man's mind a wholesome aversion to the treacherous sex called *gentle*! And just as I thought I had made him a thorough-paced bachelor like myself—slap down he jumps into the yawning gulf of matrimony, and there's an end of him as far as I'm concerned. (*testily ringing a hand-bell, and calling loudly*) Grimy, I'm ready for breakfast! (*tearing up letter*) That's the way I treat your letters, Charley. You're welcome to a wife, an income-tax not easily shaken off. I prefer a temporary incumbrance, so I go in for a *housekeeper*. I've advertised for one, and expect to get a nice one before the day's over. (*rings again loudly*) Grimy! I'm waiting for my breakfast! Yes, yes; I suppose my nephew begins to find the butcher and baker expensive acquaintances. (*rubbing his hands complacently*) There's nothing like a single life! A bachelor's table has no greedy brats squalling round it, spilling the salt and eating up the marmalade; all's nicely arranged—nothing wanting. Where *is* that hussy? 'Twas just the same, yesterday; it's been the same for a month. (*ringing violently*) Grimy! Gri—my, I say!

GRIMY. (*without, L.*) I'm a-coming!

CRUSTY. Where's the steak?

GRIMY. (*without*) It's a frying!

CRUSTY. While I'm *stewing* here! (*bawling*) Bring it directly. Do you hear?

GRIMY. (*without*) Don't holler so! I'm a-comin'.

CRUSTY. She's always a-coming, and never arrives. I swear it's too bad. That jade always spoils my appetite. But never mind! when I've a *housekeeper* things will be very different.—Oh, here you are.

Enter GRIMY, L., a dish in one hand, and a large mop in the other, and a plate of toast—face and hands smeared with black, greasy apron, &c.

GRIMY. Yes, here I are.

CRUSTY. (*pointing to her*) *There's a neat article for a bachelor's establishment!* What do you mean by keeping me waiting in this manner?

GRIMY. You ain't waited no more nor usual.

CRUSTY. Put down the dish, idiot. (*GRIMY goes to table, and sets down the dish*) Don't touch the bread! how dare you come in with such hands?

GRIMY (*looking at her hands and turning them about*) What's the matter with 'em?

CRUSTY. The matter! why, you're grimy all over!

GRIMY. I ain't got no time to clean myself.

CRUSTY. It would take some time, indeed! But you're always idling about, and talking to a set of scamps at the area steps. There was one yesterday—a great hulking fellow—going on at the door for an hour.

GRIMY. He were a *cousin* o' mine.

CRUSTY. A cousin? why, you told me the *short* one, that come the day before, was your cousin.

GRIMY. Well, this was *another* cousin.

CRUSTY. Well, well, I shall set things to rights by and bye. (*tasting the toast*) Pish! This toast is as cold as a stone.

GRIMY. Werry good, (*advancing to the table*) then I'll 'eat it for you, and bring it up again. (*about to take away the toast-plate.*)

CRUSTY. Don't touch it!

GRIMY. Why, ain't I been a-touching it afore I brought it ye?

CRUSTY. Put it down, and hold your tongue. Now, mind what I say, I expect some *ladies* here this morning, so don't be running out just as you're wanted.

GRIMY. Ladies a-comin'? I wish you'd told me afore! I wouldn't ha' cleaned the street door till the arternoon—I'm *always* a-washin' them steps arter some dirt or other!

CRUSTY. (*sharply*) It's very little trouble. (*helping himself from the table.*)

GRIMY. Are it! It ain't such a heasy matter as you thinks. What with the dust, and the children's *percolators* a-runnin' agin one—(*two loud single knocks and a ring outside.*)

CRUSTY. There's somebody. It's one of the ladies, no doubt. Show her in.

GRIMY. Ah, I spose there's a lot on 'em?

CRUSTY. I'll see one at a time.

GRIMY. (*going*) Well, I only wishes you'd got to clean up arter 'em, that's all. (*Exit L. D.*)

CRUSTY. (*pulling his shirt collar, settling his neckcloth, &c.*) It's an anxious moment! I'm all in a flutter of expectation! Now then, Fortune! be goodnatured, and send me some pretty young creature that will adorn my home, and make me the happiest of men, and bache—(*stopping short with a horrified stare at SYMMONS, who disguised as an old nurse, has entered L., during the latter part of Crusty's*

speech, and approached him unperceived. He wears a black poke bonnet and frilled cap—a black bombazeen gown, with grey thread gloves out at the fingers, and carrying an old cotton umbrella, inside which is a coloured cotton handkerchief much torn.)

SYMM. (*with a curtsey, and speaking with unhurried and deliberated distinctness*) I beg your parding, sir, but—it being come to my ears as to your requiry-ments of an 'ouse-keeper, some friends of mine, they says—*sich* might do for Mrs. Damper—the which is my name, it is. Hany-ways, I thought I'd step up and complicate the affair, to the best of my stability. (*curtseying.*)

CRUSTY (*aside with a groan*) Oh, lord.

SYMM. Y-es, sir!

CRUSTY. Pray sit down, if—if you like. (SYMMONS *sits down and crosses one leg over the other, then suddenly remembering himself, draws his feet together and smoothes down his petticoats*) You've seen my advertisement, of course?

SYMM. Well, sir, I may say—how I come to know it was through the instrumentation of a friend o' mine, the which is a gentleman—in the pork-and-sassage line, doin' his business in the Bagnigge-wells-road, it is.

CRUSTY. Oh!

SYMM. Yes, sir, and as your *divertissement* illicitly states that you want a young person, of agreeable appearance (*striking his umbrella on the ground between each phrase*) inapproachable carak-ter—of a soak-iable temperature, and werry prolific in 'complishments—I ventures to propound myself as one compiling all these requisitions—to im-per-fection.

CRUSTY. (*aside, despairingly*) What's to become of me?

SYMM. Yes, sir.

CRUSTY. Well, ma'am, or miss.

SYMM. Mrs. Damper.

CRUSTY. (*aside*) A devil of a damper, too! Ahem (*to SYMMONS*) The fact is I do require a—a person of irreproachable character, and sociable temper, to take the management of my household. You see, I'm rather an invalid.

SYMM. Yes, sir, you're looking werry bad! (*pointing the umbrella towards CRUSTY's gouty leg*) You're troubled with the gout.

CRUSTY. (*wincing, and waving off SYMMONS's hand*) A little, ma'am, a little.

SYMM. Ah! it's a (*bringing down the point of the umbrella with a thump, close to CRUSTY's foot*) hex-cavating pain it is.

CRUSTY. Don't mention it, ma'am. It's getting better.

SYMM. (*turning round in the chair, and looking him steadfastly in the face, shaking his head*) Ah! don't elude yourself so! It'll get worser and worser. (*with a groan*) I've seed so many o' them cases in my time, and they all ends the same way!

CRUSTY. (*pettishly*) Harkye, my good woman, don't come here telling me such stories.

SYMM. I never tell stories—I'm known for my voracity.

CRUSTY. I want a lively companion, ma'am, and upon my soul I don't think you'll do for the post.

SYMM. If you means my doing for you, sir, you'll find me werry lively.

CRUSTY. Oh, very! A charming companion, particularly on a rainy day. No, no, ma'am, you're too great a croaker to be agreeable!

SYMM. I'm werry agreeable, but (*drawing out from the umbrella an old checked pocket-handkerchief, in holes, and applying it to his eyes sobbingly*) the loss of my poor husband, only a short time back—

CRUSTY. (*compassionately, aside*) Poor woman!

SYMM. He always found me a lively, and, as he used to say, a lovely companion.

CRUSTY. (*soothingly*) Never mind, ma'am.

SYMM. He used to call me his cherry-cheeked cherubim.

CRUSTY. Never mind, ma'am, perhaps he left you some cherubs to console you?

SYMM. Only six, sir.

CRUSTY. Well, that's something. And I'm sure I'm very sorry, ma'am, that I—what did he die of?

SYMM. (*impressively pointing his forefinger at him*) The werry—same—complaint—as your'n.

CRUSTY. (*starting, and with a grimace, aside*) How pleasant!

SYMM. Yes—sir. Ah! you're the himage of what he were the day afore he went! The moment I set eyes on you—thinks I to myself—he'll be the next!

CRUSTY. (*violently*) Get out of my sight, you old screech-owl!

SYMM. Yes, sir! that's the way he'd take on, when the fit was wiolent.

CRUSTY. Get out, I say! (*ringing the handbell violently*) Here,—Grimy! Somebody! Turn this old Beldame out of the house!

SYMM. (*rising, deliberately*) Don't worrit yourself, poor wictim;—I'm a-going,—and so are you—werry fast. But I bears no maliciousness. (*turning round as he gains the*

door) When you gets worse, and can't help yourself—send for me, and you'll see how I'll serve you! (*Exit L.*—

(CRUSTY *snatches a pillow from the back of his chair, and hurls it after him.*)

CRUSTY. Get out, you scarecrow! you hobgoblin! She has pumped all the breath out of me! I feel as if a nightmare with a poke bonnet and umbrella—Well, if I get nothing but *this* in answer to my advertisement, I'm in a pretty quandary! (*mimicking*) “Damper is my name it is,” —says she. A damper with a vengeance! I feel a cold bath splashing all over me. (*a loud rat-tut-tat outside*) There! I'm in for it again! All the registry offices in London marching down upon me at once!

GRIMY. (*bursting in suddenly, and very loudly*) I say!

CRUSTY. Oh, lord, what's that? How dare you bounce in in that way?

GRIMY. (*pointing over her shoulder*) Here's another!

CRUSTY. Another? If she's anything like the last, I'm a dead man!

GRIMY. Oh, she ain't *nothink* like! She's a perfect *contract* to the other. (*throwing wide the glass doors in c.*) I'm going to let her in by the garden way.

CRUSTY. What for?

GRIMY. 'Cause the parlour door ain't wide enough for her to *scroudge* through.

CRUSTY. What!

GRIMY. Here she is. (*getting down L.*) There's plenty on her at all events!

• *Enter SUSAN, making her way with apparent difficulty through the c. d., her dress being distended by crinoline. She wears the hat and feathers, and her whole appearance displays a high caricature of the fashionable costume.*)

CRUSTY. (*bending forward, his hands on his knees, and aring at her.*) Well! She is a stunner!

GRIMY. (*L.*) There's a spicy harticle!

SUSAN (*in the c., bending her head to CRUSTY, condescendingly.*) Your most obedient.

CRUSTY. How d'ye do, Ma'am? Grimy, give the lady a chair. (*GRIMY slyly picks out a small cane-chair, and places it immediately behind SUSAN, unnoticed by her, then exit, staring at her, L. D.*)

SUSAN. (*still standing c.*) My name is—Furbelow.

CRUSTY. Ah? Oh!

SUSAN. (*speaking affectedly with a drawling tone.*) I've called—in consequence of a—an advertisement—

CRUSTY. Yes, ma'am.

SUSAN. In the *Times*, from a gentleman requiring an agreeable superintendent of his domestic comforts. *You, I presume, (scanning him through her eye-glass) are the—in—di—vid—u—al; eh?*

CRUSTY. *(imitating her)* I—am—ex—act—ly!

SUSAN. *(looking at her watch)* I'm a few seconds behind my time, but the truth is, not wishing to arrive too early, —I came by the omnibus.

CRUSTY. *(aside)* A pretty subject for a buss!

SUSAN. And—ah! It wasn't pleasant!

CRUSTY. I'm sure *I* should have said so, too.

SUSAN. Men are such *bears* now-a-days! We, poor women, are less than *nothing* in their eyes.

CRUSTY. *(aside)* Nothing's rather *large*, I think!

SUSAN. And they—cr—rush one so, that really a lady in an omnibus never finds room enough to sit comfortably.

CRUSTY. True, ma'am. I've heard *gentlemen* make the same complaint.

SUSAN. Well, so have I. John Symmons,—*(ahem!)* a friend of mine says—that when he's in an omnibus with ladies, he feels like a second *Jonah*,—surrounded by *whale bone*.

CRUSTY. *(laughing heartily)* H^a! ha! ha! But, please to sit down, ma'am, and I'll explain my wishes with regard to the situation I have to offer.

SUSAN. If you please. *(looking on each side of her for the chair, which is entirely hidden by the breadth of her dress.)* Really, chairs now-a-days are so small—

CRUSTY. They are so; but *some* seats are larger than others, and if you'll only look behind, *(pointing to an easy chair up the stage)* you'll find a capacious one.

SUSAN. Oh, it's no matter. I'm a little body, and the one I've got will do.

CRUSTY. I hope you can manage it, ma'am,—for I can't help you. My leg forbids gallantry.

SUSAN. *(having sat down, and spreading her skirt on each side)* Now, sir, I'm ready to hear what you require from the lady undertaking the domestic duties of your establishment; but perhaps I had better, first, let you know what I should require, if I embraced your offer.

CRUSTY. *(after a stare of surprise)* By all means!

SUSAN. I must then inform you, that I've always been accustomed to a—very large circle.

CRUSTY. Yes, ma'am. *(looking at her crinoline)* Every one can see that.

SUSAN. And the only thing that would reconcile me to the narrow limits of—shall we say *this* little dwelling? would be my meeting with one who could appreciate my habits and feelings; but above all, I require *sympathy*—sweet sympathy, and when I find myself in presence of a congenial spirit—(*rising from the chair by degrees, and spreading out her arms in an affected attitude*) I expand—expand—

CRUSTY. (*aside*) Gracious! If she goes on expanding, the house won't hold her!

SUSAN. But—if I come into contact with any of the *bearskin wrappers* of society, I shr-r-ink into nothing! My buoyancy leaves me, I become in fact, a—a—

CRUSTY. (*aside*) A collapsed balloon!

SUSAN. (*with an affected shudder*) Dreadful to imagine! (*turning her back she walks up the stage and returns towards table.*)

CRUSTY. I understand, ma'am; and, taking a *broad* view of the case, I should say that a lady of your *extreme* elegance—(*she bows, simpering*) *sylph-like* appearance—(*she bows again*) and *unapproachable* charms—

SUSAN. Ah, now you *want* to come round me!

CRUSTY. (*hastily*) Wouldn't attempt it for the world, ma'am; not even if my leg were well. I only mean to say that I fear my *little* establishment is too *small* to admit of your being taken in.

SUSAN. (*indignantly*) Sir, you then decline my services?

CRUSTY. My income is narrow, and my house on a scale that affords no room for—

SUSAN. Oh! ah! well, it's of no consequence, old gentleman. Perhaps you're right. My residence here would involve you in a *round* of gaiety; and an elderly man like yourself is better fitted for the privacy of a back parlour than the (*shaking out her skirts to their full extent*) overwhelming *bustle* of fashionable life. (*she sails out through the glass doors, c.*)

CRUSTY. (*bawling after her*) Take care of the door, ma'am. A diving-bell is nothing to her! Housekeeper, indeed! If she keeps anything she shall keep her distance. She's the last I'll see, that I'm determined on.

GRIMY. (*entering, L.*) Is the roundabout lady gone, sir?

CRUSTY. (*angrily*) Hark you, you jade, don't open the door again, let who *will* come.

GRIMY. I can't keep 'em out! There's a *dozen* coming up *the street*, and *sich* a crowd on the steps!

CRUSTY. Close the shutters—hang out a bill—tell 'em I'm dead, and suited!

GRIMY. 'Tain't no use your taking on like that! You've gone and done it, and you've got to go through with it, and see everybody as comes.

CRUSTY. I'll see you and everbody—*further first*. I shall commit murder, I know I shall. (*a loud single knock outside.*)

GRIMY. (*looking off, L.*) Who now? Oh, my! Here's five hundred and thirty-seven wants to have a word with you.

CRUSTY. What! Five hundred of 'em! call the police.

GRIMY. He's close by, without my calling. (*beckoning, L.*) Step this way, please; master's agreeable.

CRUSTY. (*with rage, shaking his fist at her*) I'm not agreeable. How dare you tell such a lie, you baggage.

Enter SYMMONS, L., disguised as a policeman, white cotton gloves on, the number on his collar very conspicuous.

GRIMY. (*showing him in*) Come in! (*to CRUSTY*) Here's number 537—a defective perliceman.

CRUSTY. (*indignantly*) What the devil does he want?

SYMM. (*loud rough voice*) Your name's *Crust*—ain't it?

GRIMY. Yes, and a precious hard crust he be!

SYMM. (*advancing to him*) Landlord of the 'ouse, Bayswater, West district! Known in the vicinity as 'Olly-hock Willar, ain't it?

CRUSTY. (*snappishly*) What then?

SYMM. (*taking off his helmet and holding it before him with both hands, and drawing himself up stiffly, as in the attitude of giving evidence, while CRUSTY stares at him with amazement*) From hinformation received at the Police Station this morning, from a young woman, cook and 'ousemaid in the sarvice of the 'ouse number one, Bayswater; and which young woman's hevidence is to be depended on—

CRUSTY. Stop, stop! What young woman can give any information about me?

GRIMY. I can; and I've done it. This young man's my cousin—one of 'em, and he knows what you wants, and he's come to settle your business.

SYMM. Just so. You need some one to *do* for you; a sort of female *Hinspector*, as one may say, to overlook the bottom part of the premises. Now, next to a P'licemen,—*the best person to see after things in the kitchen—(when the master ain't able to get down stairs) is an 'ousekeeper, that's got a brother, or a son, or an 'usband, or a cousin,*

in the P'lice force. (to GRIMY) That's speaking plain,—ain't it?

GRIMY. O' course!

SYMM. (*gruffly*) *Of course!* (to CRUSTY) Well then, the pris'n'r having told me—I mean understanding you're in want of a respectable party to *do* for you,—all I've got to say is—you're quite welcome to my wife.

CRUSTY. What!

SYMM. (to GRIMY) *That's* straight forwards,—*ain't* it?

GRIMY. O' course.

SYMM. *O' course.*

CRUSTY. (*angrily*) What does the fellow mean? I don't want *any* man's wife.

SYMM. I'll answer for mine being a comfort to any man.

GRIMY. (to CRUSTY) You'd *better* have her! His wife's the very moral of *me* in everything; so you'll have such a pair in the 'ouse as never was!

SYMM. Yes; and besides, consider the advantage of having my missis!

CRUSTY. A policeman's wife for a housekeeper!

SYMM. There it *is*! From the day a p'liceman's wife enters your service, you'll never need to hunt for a p'liceman! you'll be certain always to find one close at hand,—whether you wants him or not.

GRIMY. Only think o' that now! 'Taint every one has such luck.

CRUSTY. (*aside*) I shall choke with vexation! A helpless victim—in the hands of the police! (*throwing himself back in his chair.*)

SYMM. (*aside to GRIMY, in his natural voice*) D'ye think I've given him a fright?

GRIMY. (*aside to him*) O' course ye have. The very look on you's enough to frighten *any* one!

SYMM. Ahem! (*going up to table, and sitting on the edge of it—to CRUSTY.*) Now that I've stated the case, your worship,—(I mean Mr. Crust,) you've only to *wissue* a summons for the party's attendance, and I'll go and pull-up my old woman directly.

CRUSTY. Not for the world! keep your wife to yourself! I'll have nothing to do with her!

SYMM. P'raps you're afraid of having a lot of little 'uns swarming about the place, and creating a *new-sense*; but there's no fear of that. My young 'uns is all out in the world, a-doing for theirselves, and comfortably settled in Ameriky.

CRUSTY. I'm very glad to hear it!

GRIMY. Yes, that's a blessing! I wish somebody would settle me.

CRUSTY. I wish they *would*, with all my heart.

SYMM. So, you see, you've only to make up your mind to take my hoffer—(which you couldn't do a better thing for *all parties*) and you'll find yourself thoroughly done for in *no time*.

CRUSTY. I don't doubt it.

GRIMY. Ay, there'll be nothing miss'd out o' the pantry then. None of your joints will walk up the *hairy steps*, while *he's* about.

SYMM. Just you think it over a bit, Mr. Crust, and I'll look in again by-and-bye; I'm always round this way at *one o'clock*, as near as possible.

GRIMY. Ahem! *Dinner time*.

SYMM. Then again, punctilily, two minutes afore *five*.

GRIMY. Ahem! *Tea time*.

SYMM. And, then you get me again at half-after *nine*.

GRIMY. Ahem! *Supper time*.

SYMM. By which time I'm off duty for the night. If I'm wanted for anything between them hours, this young woman knows where to find me.

GRIMY. (*nodding her head*) Yes; *all my cousins lives close by*.

CRUSTY. (*aside*) There's a whole gang of 'em, and this hussy's at the head of it; I begin to feel all over—where's the brandy? (*he turns to the little table, fills out a glass then stops, seized with a sudden twinge of gout, and putting down the bottle and glass on the breakfast table, rubs his leg*) Ha, there's a twinge!

SYMM. (*emptying the glass*) Thankee, sir.

CRUSTY. (*with a stare of indignant surprise*) Well, upon my word! Help yourself.

SYMM. (*helping himself to another glass*) You're very kind, Mr. Crust. Here's wishin' you out of your troubles. (*drinks*) That's prime stuff, and does one good.

CRUSTY. Why, you brazen—I've a great mind to report you.

SYMM. No port, thankye; I prefers the brandy. (*setting down the glass*) Good day t'ye, Mr. Crust; I'll go now. You shall see me again shortly, and I'll bring my old woman with me. Your's is a comfortable place in all respects, and I shouldn't like her to lose it. (*chucking GRIMY under the chin, and going L.*) By-bye, my pretty cousin. *Don't stir, I can find the door by myself.*

(*Exit L., followed by GRIMY.*)

CRUSTY. If I had known the cost of an advertisement in the *Times*, I should have saved my money and my quiet. What a state for an invalid! There's a conspiracy against me, and I can only escape it by chloroform. (*bawling*) Grimy!

GRIMY. (*entering*) Here I be. 537 is gone—and there's only *one* left now, a-waiting in the passage, and there's no gittin' on her out.

CRUSTY. I won't see her!

GRIMY. You *must*. (*looking off L.*) She's a-comin' up.

CRUSTY. She shan't come in.

GRIMY. Who's to stop her?

CRUSTY. (*making a desperate effort to rise*) Oh, if I'd only my legs!

GRIMY. But you 'aven't—and that's a mercy.

CRUSTY. Ah, it's all up with me! (*he falls back in his chair pulling his cap over his face.*)

GRIMY. No, it's all down with ye; but it's no use your pulling down the blinds, you can't blind your ears. (*aside*) Now for the little chicken! (*she beckons on JESSIE, who enters timidly, L., aside to her in a soft voice*) Keep up your courage, ma'am, and don't be afeard. Your 'usband's outside.

JESSIE. Oh dear—I wish I hadn't come! You're sure I may venture, Grimy?

GRIMY. What's to perwent you? Ain't we *all* perspiring agin him? Just you see if he doesn't melt down in no time. (*she hides behind CRUSTY's easy chair, now and then nodding encouragement to JESSIE, popping down, and up again, at intervals.*)

JESSIE. (*advancing timidly towards CRUSTY*) Ahem! Sir! Mr.—Crusty

CRUSTY. (*gruffly, without stirring*) Well?

JESSIE. (*stepping back in alarm*) Good gracious!

GRIMY. (*making signs to her over the back of the chair*) At him again, he's a great coward. (*pops down again*)

JESSIE. (*advancing towards CRUSTY again*) I came to speak to you, sir—about—but I'm afraid you are angry, and I wouldn't offend you for the world.

CRUSTY. (*aside, pushing up his cap*) Eh? that's not a disagreeable voice. Let's have a peep (*he suddenly pulls off the cap and looks at JESSIE—she curtsies*) Come, I say, I rather like the looks of this one. She's at least of natural dimensions. (*to her*) So, you want to speak to me, my little dear, do you?

JESSIE. Yes, sir, about the housekeeper's place.

CRUSTY. (*sharply*) And you want to *get* it, eh?

JESSIE (*retreating, nervously*) No, sir—yes, sir—just as you please.

CRUSTY (*aside*) She's a darling. (*to her*) Don't be frightened, pussy; I've been suffering from the nightmare! I've had three attacks in three shapes of horrid variety, and my usual amiability has had a shock. I'm rather a good old fellow in the main.

JESSIE. I'm *sure* you are, and I should very much like to please you.

CRUSTY. (*shaking his head*) Ah, old men are rather *hard* to please. They like to be coaxed—they like to have the newspaper read to them all *through* of an evening.

JESSIE. Oh, I like reading aloud—I know I should suit you in that.

CRUSTY. Then, they're fond of a cosy chat by the fire-side, with a nice companion, just before supper, when all's quiet. But young women prefer at any time the sparks out of doors to those in the parlour-grate, and so—

JESSIE. Not *all*, sir. I prefer the comforts of home to the pleasures of the world. The family parlour would be my kingdom, a chair in the chimney-corner my throne—and busy as a bee throughout the day, I'll sit by your side at night, and talk, or read, or sing to you, and make you as happy as I can.

CRUSTY. (*with determination*) The business is settled! Yes, yes, this is rather different from Mrs. Damper, and the balloon and feathers. (*to JESSIE*) You shan't go out of this house any more. I love you already; if I don't—I'm a—hip-po-potamus! (*pulling a bunch of keys from his pocket*) Here, take the keys of all the lock-ups in the house, store-room and tea-caddie included. Buy what you like—spend what you like; pop the milliner's bill into the baker's book, and I'll stand it like a—like a married man! (*GRIMY steals off with a dancing step through garden door, c.*)

JESSIE. Stop, sir, you don't know half my recommendations yet. I can tell *stories* capitally.

CRUSTY. Oh, bless you, I shan't interfere with any part of a housekeeper's *privileges*.

JESSIE. But I want you to *hear* a story, which I think is interesting.

CRUSTY. Tell away! I'll listen, if it's as long as—the Atlantic cable! (*he kicks away the foot-rest and flannels, and pushing the hassock towards JESSIE, motions her to sit down*)

JESSIE. (*sitting down*) Well, sir,—you must know—there was once a rich old gentleman—just like *you*—

CRUSTY. (*settling his collar*) Ahem! Not so very old, if you look close.

JESSIE. And he was a *bachelor*—and had but one relation in the world.

CRUSTY. Lucky dog!

JESSIE. A *nephew*, whom he loved dearly.

CRUSTY. (*rubbing his leg*) Hah! there was a *twinge*!

JESSIE. And the uncle and nephew were very fond of each other, and lived in the same house, and never disagreed.

CRUSTY. Astonishing!

JESSIE. Now it so happened, that one fine morning, this young man got up very early, and went out—to church.

CRUSTY. Very proper. A very *good* young man.

JESSIE. Yes, sir; and whilst he was there—he got *married*.

CRUSTY. Married?

JESSIE. Yes, sir; to a young girl—just like *me*.

CRUSTY. Sweet little article—detestable little hussy.

JESSIE. And his *marble*-hearted uncle, (as uncles always are)—

CRUSTY. No, ma'am, they're not!

JESSIE. But in *novels*, sir!

CRUSTY. Oh, ay; that's true. Uncles in novels are very different things from uncles in real life.

JESSIE. Well; *this* young man's uncle turned him out of doors, and refused to have anything to do with him, or his poor little wife.

CRUSTY. Um! I've heard a story, something like this, *before*.

JESSIE. I dare say. Some uncles are very bad. Few are so kind-hearted and loveable as *you* are.

CRUSTY. (*taking her hand*) Come a little closer, my dear.

JESSIE. Well, sir; for twelve long weary months, poor Charles—

CRUSTY. Charles!

JESSIE. That's the *nephew's* name, sir; poor Charles and his wife didn't know what to do to obtain forgiveness for their rash marriage; till it struck *Jessie*, (that's the *wife's* name, sir.)—

CRUSTY. Very pretty name, *Jessie*.

JESSIE. *Jessie*, then, fancied that if she could manage to get an interview with this terrible uncle, she might perhaps succeed in winning his pardon for herself and

husband. So, one morning,—first putting the baby to sleep—

CRUSTY. There's a baby too?

JESSIE. Yes; such a nice little thing! very like its mamma,—and she's very like *me*. (CRUSTY *kisses her*.) Bless me, Mr. Crusty! (*rising*.)

CRUSTY. I'm kissing the *baby*, my dear. I like *nice* little things.

JESSIE. Well, then, sir, to end the story,—the wife *did* gain admittance to the uncle,—and he owned that he rather liked her,—(as you told *me* just now) and—and—(GRIMY *appears behind at garden door with CHARLES*) the end of it was—

CRUSTY. Go on, my dear; *what* was the end of it?

JESSIE. (*dropping on her knees with earnestness*) She knelt down *thus*,—and clasping her hands *thus*,—both she and her husband who just then came in,—(CHARLES *steals forward on tiptoe*) cried out—

GRIMY. (*at the glass-door*) In a *verry* loud voice—

CHARL. } *both kneeling* } Dear Uncle, forgive us!

CRUSTY. What! (*starting up from his chair in amazement, GRIMY vanishes*.)

JESSIE. Dear uncle, forgive us, and let *me* be your housekeeper!

CRUSTY. My rascal of a nephew?

CHARLES. Yes, sir,—and his roguish little wife.

CRUSTY. (*bending down towards them with his hands on his knees*.) You are a pretty pair!

JESSIE. Thank you, sir.

CHARLES. I *knew* you'd say so, uncle.

CRUSTY. This, I suppose, is what you call, "Doing your Uncle?" (*shaking his fist playfully at JESSIE*) Oh, you little baggage! So, in spite of me, you've got into the house at last!

CHARL. Only to stay there as long as *you* please, sir.

JESSIE. And only to go away, sir, when you don't like me any more.

CRUSTY. (*raising her*) Then it's likely you'll stop here for ever.

CHARL. And I too, sir?

CRUSTY. Get up, you scapegrace; I don't know if I shan't divorce you yet. But as for you, my pretty Jessie, *you'll do*; and I forgive you for having pleased me. Here *you shall remain*; and here are the keys—

Re-enter GRIMY, carrying the baby in long clothes, &c.

GRIMY. And here's the baby, come in a cab by hisself.
(*gets to R. C.*)

CRUSTY. Oh! I forgot that little addition. Well, well, in for a penny, in for a pound; I'll take the baby into the bargain.

GRIMY. You'll find him a good 'un. (*patting it on the back*) Thump him as hard as you like, and he won't cry.

CRUSTY. That's just the baby for *me* then. (*taking it from GRIMY.*) Come to my arms, soft image of thy mother.

GRIMY. And a werry *nice* himage, too!

CRUSTY. Hold your tongue! May'st thou be the founder of a long line of *Hopefuls*—counting no bachelors among 'em! For the man who wishes to know what true happiness is, must, *firstly* get a wife to make his house warm; *secondly*, a handful of little olive branches to climb about him; and, *thirdly*—

SYMM. (*still disguised as MRS. DAMPER, popping his head in at garden door.*) And lastly, a friend to help him in his need!

CRUSTY. (*dropping the baby, which GRIMY fortunately catches*) Help! murder! there's that old screech-owl come back.

JESSIE. Don't be frightened, sir, it's only a friend.

CHARL. (*eagerly*) A kind-hearted, gentle creature.

CRUSTY. Gentle? Oh, very. Turn her out, I say, there's nothing of the woman there!

GRIMY. (*aside, hugging the baby*) Drat him, he'll say *I'm* no woman next!

CRUSTY. (*retreating R. as SYMMONS advances towards him*) Keep off!

SYMM. Know me in my true character.

CRUSTY. I haven't the slightest desire.

SYMM. Look at me in my *natural* stato. (*throwing off bonnet and shawl and then tugging at the dress skirt.*)

CRUSTY. Woman! What are you about?

SYMM. (*pulling off the petticoat at last*) Getting rid of my feminine softness. And now, know me for myself! Jack Symmons of Symmon's Inn, learned in the law; your nephew's friend at all times; a *monthly nurse*, on extraordinary occasions; and a *policeman* for the benevolent purpose of—"Doing my Uncle."

CRUSTY. What! Were you the five hundred and thirty-seven?

SYMM. Yes, all in one.

CRUSTY. Zounds and the devil, *here's* been a pretty conspiracy. You were all in a plot against me.

SYMM. Every one of us! This young couple told me of your wise project, and I resolved to put a *Damper* on it.

CRUSTY. Don't talk of it.

GRIMY. (*with a grin*) And they give me a sov'rin' to help 'em.

CRUSTY. Well, and I'll give you another—(GRIMY, *clapping the baby under her arm, extends her palm to him*)—when I advertise for a Housekeeper again!

SYMM. (*leading SUSAN forward, who enters through glass-door, still attired as MISS FURBELOW*) And here's another conspirator who asks forgiveness. This young woman has a mortal dislike to bachelors,—and means to make me a married man to-morrow.

CRUSTY. What? Hoop-de-dooden-do!

SUSAN. (*curtseying respectfully*) The same, sir; but I mean to give-up the hoop to-day, and wear the ring to-morrow.

CRUSTY. Bravely resolved; and to shew the hatred I'm beginning to feel, myself, towards all *single* men,—I'll stand the wedding-breakfast to-morrow for Jack Symmons and his bride.

SYMM. Three cheers for Mr. Crusty!

GRIMY. (*dandling the baby*) Hooray! And I'll make the cake! Won't it be savoury!

CRUSTY. I declare ye've frightened away my gout!—(*heartily.*) Come along all of ye to the drawing-room, that I may put the future mistress of the establishment in formal possession. And I trust all our friends will approve my choice, and allow that Timothy Crusty is well suited at last.

SYMM. (*clapping him on the shoulder*) Yes,—and suited to a T; and as I have contributed to the happy end, I hope I am entitled to *my* share of the praise. So is Susan; and I'm sure we shall make a charming pair, and perhaps find an Uncle also! At all events, may every worthy young couple when hard pressed, not only find an uncle to be done, but also find a friend ready to help them in

“DOING MY UNCLE.”

CURTAIN.

MEG'S DIVERSION.

A Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

H. T. CRAVEN,

(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society),

AUTHOR OF

Milky White, Miriam's Crime, The Post Boy, My Preserver, Bowled Out, One Nelly, Village Nightingale, The Chimney Corner, My Daughter's Debut, Tie-Doloureux, Not to be Done, Done Brown, Tom Smart, Little Nun, Alonzo the Brave (Burlesque), Fellow Servants, Blechington House, Card Case, One Tree Hill, &c., &c., &c.

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MEG'S DIVERSION.

*First produced at the New Royalty Theatre, October 17th,
1866 (under the management of Miss M. Oliver).*

Characters.

JEREMY CROW ... (*a Devonshire Farmer*) Mr. RUSSELL.
ASHLEY MERTON, Esq. ... (*of the Hall*)... Mr. C. WYNDHAM.
JASPER PIDGEON (*a Village Carpenter*) Mr. H. T. CRAVEN.
ROLAND PIDGEON ... (*his Brother*) ... Mr. F. DEWAR.
EYTEM (*an Exeter Lawyer*) Mr. KENWARD.
CORNELIA ... { *Daughters of Crow* } ... Miss ANNIE BOURKE.
MARGARET ... { ... Miss M. OLIVER.
MRS. NETWELL (*of the Grange; a Widow*) Mrs. LEIGH MURRAY.
Villagers and Farm Labourers.

ACT 1.—Parlour in Crow's Farm House.

ACT 2.—Garden in Crow's Farm.

In this Act is realized Calderon's celebrated picture of

"BROKEN VOWS."

Three Months are supposed to elapse between Acts I. and II.

PERIOD :—PRESENT TIME.

Time in Representation—One Hour and Forty-five Minutes.

Costumes.

CROW.—The usual dress of a substantial farmer, cord breeches, and top boots.

MERTON. *First Dress*: Fashionable morning suit. *Second Dress*: Black ditto, white vest, and hat band.

JASPER. *First Dress*: Cord trowsers, brown short-tailed coat, blue velvet waistcoat, scarlet necktie, and white hat. *Second Dress*: Blue frock coat, drab trowsers, and billycock hat.

ROLAND. Fashionable morning suits.

EYTEM. Black, with white neck-tie.

CORNELIA. *First Dress*: Travelling dress. *Second Dress*: Light silk, with hat or bonnet.

MARGARET. *First Dress*: Light print trimmed with blue, broad straw hat. *Second Dress*: Violet velvet jacket, black handkerchief on head (*the entire dress according to Calderon's picture*).

Mrs. NETWELL. Handsome silk dresses, shawl and bonnet.

MEG'S DIVERSION.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Parlour of Jeremy Crow's Farm House.*—*Large latticed window in flat, L. C., through which is seen the farm, &c., door in flat, C.—door, L. 2 E.—cup-board, R. 3 E.—fireplace, R. The apartment is well furnished, yet with much of the farm-house style—chest of drawers, R.—looking glass, hanging R.—table with pens, ink, paper, &c., R. C.—arm chair at back, R. C.—chairs R. and L. of table—table at back, L.*

CROW and CORNELIA *are discovered, the latter fashionably attired for travelling.*

CROW. (*at table, R. C.—L. of table*) Well, lass, you look well fed and thriving, and though I'm no judge of education, I dare say you're becoming quite accomplished like. Squire Merton has promised to send in a pianoforte, to stand in that there recess; so that you can practice your variations and scaly things when you come home for a day or two. Let's see! you're learning Italian—French—Jollick—

CORNELIA. (*putting on her bonnet before glass, R.*) Logic—moral philosophy—deportment, and many other things, papa.

Crow. Papa! that gets over me—papa! That ever I, Jerry Crow, farmer, should be called papa! but I suppose it's all right, as I'm to have the presumptuous heir to a baronacy for a son-in-law.

CORN. Has Ashley told you when that is to be, papa?

CROW. As soon as his uncle, who inherited an asthma, and the rest of the entailed property, dies; he objects to the squire marrying "below par," as the pompous old aristocrat calls you. Now I consider education is making you very much above pa, and fitting you for the envious position to which a marriage with Ashley Merton, Esquire, will elevate you.

CORN. Well done, *mon père*; but grammar hardly *comme il faut*. How strange it seems though; a young lady of my age sent to boarding-school, and her schooling paid by her husband that is to be.

CROW. It's only like buying the carcass of a house, and furnishing it to your own taste.

CORN. Oh! now you've upset all by your coarseness.

CROW. (*rising*) Bless her; she's found out her father's coarse. There's the first good effect of education. But I'm nous-y, ch, Nell? Many a man would have thrown up his cards with such a hand as mine; but I've played on, and kept up the impression that I was rich in trumps.

CORN. But you are rich, papa, are you not?

CROW. Sit down, Nell; it's only right you should be undeceived. (*they sit*) I'm in Queer-street, and that's the truth.

CORN. (R.) Queer-street! where's that?

CROW. (R.C.) I'm *not* rich; to be sure I have the reputation of farming my own freehold, and I haven't felt bound to tell people that my farm has been for many years mortgaged to its full value, so that in fact if I was wound up I couldn't go on.

CORN. You astonish me! I have boasted to all our young ladies, that you owned the largest farm in the county.

CROW. Well, you can still boast; it does no harm. If I can but get my two girls well married, I shall have reaped the crop for which I have tilled; and then, if my rich sons-in-law won't back me up, I must disgrace them by being sold up.

CORN. Oh, horrible! it will disgrace *me*, papa.

CROW. Of course it will, and very soon too, unless I can borrow two thousand pounds to pay arrears of interest; and that's what I call being in Queer-street.

CORN. Do you not know anybody who might, could, would or should lend you the money?

CROW. Only one, and he might, could, and won't.

CORN. Who is that?

CROW. Jasper Pidgeon.

CORN. The carpenter?

CROW. The carpenter. His uncle has died abroad and left him considerable property, when he didn't look for a shilling, for his brother Roland was the old man's favourite—brought up by him as a gentleman with expectations—but, by George, he doesn't get a blessed fraction.

CORN. And have you asked that simpleton, Jasper, to do it?

CROW. I have; but to use his own uneducated words, he "didn't seem to see the pull!" The truth is, I have no security to offer.

CORN. Then it's a hopeless case?

CROW. No, it isn't, if your sister Meg will assist me; the fellow is head-over-ears in love with her.

CORN. Plebeian individual! Dear papa, you would never think of espousing her to a mechanic? (*rising*)

CROW. (*rising*) There you go! there you go! I don't want her to "espouse" him, as you call it; but if we could only get her to let him suppose that he might be an accepted beau, I am sure he would readily buy my consent by the loan I want.

CORN. (R.) Margaret doesn't care anything for him, does she?

CROW. (L.) Lord, she so full of coltish skittishness, plaguing the poor simpleton out of the little sense there is in his glue-pot of a head—in fact, Jasper Pigeon is Meg's diversion!

CORN. Then, we must persuade her it would be a good joke to let him think she's *fiancée* to him.

CROW. Fearncy? Oh, I know what you mean—humbug him to any extent! Hush! here she is.

MEG, with a basket of eggs, runs in door, R.

MEG. (*down, c.*) Fourteen eggs this morning! where's Corny? Ah, there she is, as large as life. (*puts down her hat and basket on table, R.*) Oh, you dear, pretty fine lady of a sister, how thorough-bred you look! Going away again to school?—ha, ha, to school! "A was an archer and shot at a frog!" What's French for frog? Is it masculine or feminine? Answer me, Miss, without hesitation, or I'll complain to your French master.

CORN. (R.) Oh, Margaret, don't be so obstreperous.

MEG. (C.) There's a word! oh my!—obstreperous! Father calls it "obstroporous," don't you, daddy?

CORN. He's most indiscriminate in his vowels.

CROW. (*aside*, L.) Now my vowels arn't right!

CORN. (*to* MEG) How *frivole* you are, dear.

MEG. Here we are again—"frivole!" *Parlez vous Francais? qu'est-ce que c'est toujours jamais paddy-whack?* Ha! ha! ha! give us all French, or all English, Corny.

CROW. Don't be so infernally flighty!

MEG. There, that's English—such as it is—but what's the matter, Corny, dear? you look out of sorts; don't mind me; I won't be *frivole* if you don't like it, for I do love my sister, and admire her too! Forgive my nonsense, won't you, dear? (*kisses her*)

CROW. (L.) Lord bless you, Meg, she doesn't mind, no more do I; we have just been splitting our sides about your cracking your jokes on Jasper Pidgeon. I do enjoy it, and that's the truth.

MEG. (C.) Poor Jasper; but doesn't he take it good-naturedly? What do you think, Corny? The other day I pinned a duster to his coat-tail, and as he went home the boys began to shout "what a tail our cat's got," and then he found it and hunted the boys for having put it there—I was never suspected, ha! ha!

CORN. I'm told he has a *penchant* for you.

MEG. *Penchant!* The idea of Jasper having a French sensation. Well, I think he is fond of me. Oh, I could have a lover if I liked, as well as my lady sister.

CORN. (R.) It would be exquisite diversion to make him believe you loved him.

CROW. (L.) It would, and that's the truth; for the impudent fellow told somebody the other day, who told me the day after, that love was like water to you, and your heart was like a duck's back.

MEG. Well, you know, the duck's back was clever.

CROW. But he needn't have called you marble—no, by-the-bye, "stone" was the word; he said you was a *precious stone*.

MEG. Does the young slanderer talk of me in that way? He shall have the stone back again. I'll make him believe that I'm dying of love for him.

CROW. Ha, ha! and let him suppose that I set my face against it; eh, Nell?

CORN. Yes, to see what the simpleton will do.

MEG. Oh, he's not such a simpleton as you think; he can give a rub if he likes; but he'll take anything from me, and would it be quite right to take advantage of that weakness?

CROW. Pooh, pooh, it will take him down a peg, if you just keep up the game for a week or two.

CORN. Yes, do, and write me full particulars. I shall enjoy the fun as much as though I were here to see it.

MEG. Poor Jasper!

CROW. He deserves it—you know that.

MEG. He has a very tender heart, I know that.

CROW. Hang it, Meg! don't go and really fall in love.

MEG. Oh, no fear of that.

CORN. Now do it to oblige me; there's a darling.

MEG. I will, Corny; I'd do anything in the world for you.

CORN. Stone as you are?

MEG. The monster, to set about such a report as that! I'll have no mercy on him.

CROW. Ha, ha, ha! Well, Meg, does cheer me up with her frolics, and that's the truth.

MEG. Yes, dad; I'm so "*frivole*," ain't I? (*a loud single knock at door in flat, which makes them start*)

CROW. Bless us, and save us!

CORN. *Bon Dieu!*

MEG. It's Jasper; he always knocks as if he'd thrown a brick at the door. (*opens door in flat*)

JASPER ~~appears~~, in his holiday suit, holding a parcel in his hand.

MEG. (*up stage, R. C.*) Oh, what a swell!

JASP. (*up stage, C.*) Out for the day. D'ye like this style?

MEG. How genteel!

JASP. Well, it's neat and unassuming, isn't it? Oh, for! there's Miss Cornelian, I declare! (*goes down to her, R. C.*)—MEG remains up, R. C.) 'Pon my word, I'm glad to see you, Miss Crow, senior; you don't look half so real

as you used to. Of course you're still delicate and lady-like; but I mean you look fresh and wholesome.

CORN. (R.) Wholesome—the idea!

JASP. No, I don't mean you look wholesome, but—(*drops parcel*) I beg your pardon, that's a little present for—(*sees Crow and crosses over to him, L. C.*) How are you, governor?

CROW. (L.) I'm glad to see you, Jasper. (*shakes hands—JASPER drops parcel*)

JASP. (L. C.) Then it's lucky I dropped in—isn't it? I say, somebody important has arrived. (*puts parcel on table at back, L.*)

MEG. (R. C., *up stage*) So it seems.

JASP. No; I mean—who do you think has come down to stay with me? Why, brother Roly! Such a noble-looking fellow! his moustachios alone command respect—at right angles with his nose, bless you—*à la Hémperor*.

MEG. Like pussy's whiskers.

JASP. And such a gift of the gab—there—talk about flowency—but it's the style, mind you!

CORN. (R.) *Distingué?*

JASP. (R. C.) Distinctly! And he's a perfect Tower of Babel in languages: why there was an Italian organ-grinder came before the window this morning, and to hear the no-mistaky way in which Roly directed him, in his own language, to go to the—I beg pardon, ladies, I was going to say, the devil. (*crosses to R. C.*)

CORN. Oh!

JASP. Devil-o is what he called it, Miss Cornelian.

CORN. My name is Cornelia.

JASP. Ah! so it is; though why and wherefor never could guess.

MEG. (*who has come down, L. C.*) She was named the necklace her godmother gave her, of course.

JASP. Well, my godfather gave me a silver spoon, they didn't christen me "Spoony."

MEG. No; your sponsors didn't do the correct thing.

JASP. Correct! Now, that's sourcaustic; but I don't mind you, Meg—you're always giving me a dig. But look out when Roland comes!—talk about Rolands for Olives—eh, governor?

CROW. (L.) Well, bring him here to amuse us.

JASP. (R. C.) Oh! he's not particular as to his company: I'll bring him.

CORN. (R.) And the moustache *recherché*?

JASP. Ah! your remarks are French polished—a cut above me that; though this morning I partly translated a Scotch song into Latin.

MEG. (L. C.) Who said “learned pig”?—that's very rude!

JASP. (*expostulating*) Now, governor——

CROW. I didn't say it; but bless us and save us—a carpenter learning Latin!

MEG. The learned gentleman of the bench.

CORN. Favour us with your *chanson* in the dead language.

MEG. Dead! Yes, if Jasper sings, he'll murder it.

JASP. Go it, Meg! Well, I saw in a book that *corpus* was Latin for “body,” so it immediately occurred to me to adopt it to music. (*sings*)

“Gin a corpus meet a corpus, coming through the rye,
Gin a corpus kiss a corpus, need a corpus cry.”

(*all laugh*—MEG crosses at back to R. C.—CROW goes up to window)

Well, that's the way Miss Cornelian speaks French.

MEG. (*aside to CORNELIA*) There, I told you he could give a rub.

CROW. There's Merton waiting to escort you to the coach, Nell.

JASP. (L.) Talking about him reminds me to tell you that I made an investment yesterday.

CROW. (*at table, R. C.*) You mean that you bought a new waistcoat, or——

MEG. (R. C.) A straight-waistcoat.

JASPER. (*expostulating*) Now, governor.

CROW. (*pointing to MEG*) She said straight-waistcoat—go on.

JASP. You know Eytem, of the firm of Pepper and Gulp, the Exeter lawyers?—well, he comes to me and says he's got Mrs. Netwell's little estate to sell for three thousand pound—dash'd if I didn't clinch it, there and the

MEG. Who said "fools and their money?"

JASP. (L.—*expostulating*) Now, governor!

CROW. (*coming down, c.*) I didn't say so; but, my lad, I think you've put your foot in it.

JASP. No, I shan't even put my foot in it; for I sold it to-day for four thousand—ha, ha! Had you there, governor! Who do you think bought it?

CORN. Some madman, I should think.

JASP. (*crossing to L. c.*) Yes, your lover, Hashley Mutton, Esquire.

CORN. "Ashley Merton," if you please, sir.

CROW. (L.—*to JASPER*) How queer you are in your vowels!

JASP. Now, governor—well, a thousand clear shan't be such a bad spec, eh?

CROW. Ah! luck's better than brains; but I think Ashley has acted rashly.

CORN. The estate's join; he knows what he is about, papa. But I musn't keep him waiting. *Bon jour*, Mr. Pidgeon. (*aside to him*) Don't trifle with poor Margaret.

JASP. Eh?

CORN. (*goes to MEG, R. c.*) Margeret, *au revoir*! I shall see you again in a month. Don't come to see me, dear; the young ladies are such quizzes.

MEG. (R.) Ah! you're ashamed of homely Meg—well, I don't wonder at it; but they can't quizz my own sister, she's better than any of them—(*kisses her*)—good bye, darling!

CROW. (*at back, putting on hat, and taking up a bonnet box*) I'll see you on to the road.

CORN. (*aside to MEG*) Don't forget your diversion.

Exeunt CROW and CORNELIA, door in flat.

MEG. (R. c.) Isn't she a pretty creature?

JASP. (L. c.) Well, I'm not given to soap, or I'd venture upon saying I know a prettier (*fetching parcel from table at back, L.*) Now, look here, Meg; I've been and took the liberty of buying you a shawl—(*gives parcel*)—'cause in that easter wind on Easterly Sunday, you looked as cold as a stone.

MEG. Ah! you think me as cold as a stone, do you?

JASP. Put the thing aside—don't undo it till I'm gone.

MEG. (*puts it in drawer, R.*) How am I ever to return it,

JASP. Return it—nonsense—keep it!

MEG. (*coming forward, R. C.*) I'm sure the shawl will increase the warmth of my feeling, but you don't expect it will make me love you, do you?

JASP. (*L. C.*) Oh, no; I'm not such a fool as that comes to; you're too superior an article for me, and I know it—you don't care two-pence for me, and I know it—and if I love you, Meg, it's because I can't help it, in spite of all your sky-larking.

MEG. Oh, Jasper; I'm not stone!

JASP. Yes, you are, Meg—a precious stone.

MEG. You don't believe I've a heart for anybody.

JASPER. (*with a little emotion*) Yes; when Mr. Wright comes, I shall have the—the undescribable pleasure of seeing him walk off with you, and I only hope that Wright will be up to the mark, and make you a good husband.

MEG. Oh, go along, now, do! Don't say such things, don't! Jasper, I care for nobody in the world but you; I'm a weak, foolish girl, I know, but your charms have conquered.

JASP. My what?

MEG. Don't you see that I adore you?

JASP. Meg!

MEG. Now despise me! It's like all the men—as soon as they know a poor girl dotes on them they trample them under foot. (*she pretends to cry, and sits, R.*)

JASP. You—you take my breath away! Don't joke—don't joke with me, Meg, pray don't.

MEG. Joke! There you go!—that's right!—trample on me—dance on my tenderest feelings—accuse me of joking, do!

JASP. You mean to say you—oh, lor'!—I love me?

MEG. Oh, don't I!

JASP. And I ignorant—

MEG. No doubt of it.

JASP. Look here, Meg. You are too good to deceive a poor fellow who worships the ground you sit upon. Say you love me in three words, and I'll believe you.

MEG. In three words—don't I love you! No, that's four. Never mind—keep in "don't." But why did I tease you so, Jasper, if I didn't?—answer me that. (*rises and comes forward, R. C.*)

JASP. Well, if that's a prod' of love, I'm convinced on the spot. But, Meg—dear Meg, you never gave me the faintest hint.

MEG. Because I thought father would never consent.

JASP. And do you think he will now?

MEG. I don't know—ask him.

JASP. I will. Lord! it gives me such a palpitation, because it's come on me in such a clap-of-lightning way: I've often gone so far as to dream of you; but I never dreamed to such a pitch as to—oh! may I—excuse me if it's coming it too strong—may I mortise our little understanding with a—excuse me for giving it a name—a kiss!

MEG. Oh, I couldn't; 'pon my word, I couldn't. I'll bank it for you till father consents: you may kiss the back of my hand, if you please; it's just as good. (*offers her hand*)

JASP. Well, that's a matter of opinion; but I've a lively imagination, so upon these lips, (*kissing her hand*) which matter-of-fact people would call fingers, I swear you've made me as happy as any fellow can be, without going ramping mad.

MEG. (*going to cupboard, R.*) Won't you take something after your fright? Have a glass of wine.

JASP. I will, and pledge myself to you. A glass of wine from your hands is something to smack my own lips over.

MEG. (*fills glass and gives it*) Make haste! here's father coming.

JASP. (*C.*) I was going to make a few ple—pre—liminary remarks—

MEG. Make haste!

JASP. (*tips it off*) Bah—booh—phit! Why that's vinegar! (*crosses over to fireplace, R., spitting*)

MEG. (*smelling the bottle*) Oh, lor! so it is. Forgive me—forgive me, Jasper—my own one! I have done for you!

JASP. (*R.*) No, but you've pickled me; but you didn't do it on purpose did you?

MEG. (L.) Oh, Jasper! can you think me such a stone?

JASP. It wouldn't be the first trick you'd played me; but I don't think you'd do such a thing now. (MEG replaces bottle and glass in cupboard—JASPER crosses to L.)

Enter CROW, door in flat.

CROW. There, I've handed Nell over to the care of her lover; no doubt he's bursting to say some tender things, for a lover's mouth is full of sweets—isn't it, Jasper?

JASP. (L.) Well, there's a slight acidity about mine.

CROW. (C.) Ah, but you arn't a lover.

JASP. That's all you know about it, governor.

CROW. Meg, you're my secretary; drop a line to Eytem, the lawyer; say he shall hear from me next week—that's all; here's pen and paper.

MEG. All right, dad. (*takes paper, &c., crosses to L., and speaks aside to JASPER*) Speak now, dear, dearer, dearest Jasper! speak forcibly—put it strong. (*smothers her laughter, and exit L. door*)

CROW. (R.C.) Soh, young Pidgeon, you've got possession of your property?

JASP. (L.C.) A decent slice of it. But, upon my word, I can't help feeling for poor Roly; my conscience won't let me sleep if I don't do something handsome for him.

CROW. Pooh, pooh! if your brother's a dashing fellow, he'll find a rich wife; as for you, keep your money, and you can afford to marry who you like—think of that!

JASP. No, I couldn't; because, put it this way—suppose her father wouldn't make himself agreeable in the matter?

CROW. Money is a strong argument to the parental ear.

JASP. Then let it argufy with you, governor. I love Meg! There, it's out!

CROW. (*retreating, R.*) What!

JASP. And she loves me. (CROW approaches him) Stop, stop—don't kick me out just yet. She's as dutiful as she is beautiful, and won't give me any encouragement without your consent.

CROW. (*takes chair, and sits, R. C.*) And am I to suppose you are now asking it?

JASP. Down as a hammer! Draw it mild, there's a good governor. I feel as if I was waiting for an enlightened jury to bring in a verdict of life and death.

Crow. (*folding his arms*) Now, look you here, Pidgeon. That girl is the apple-pip of my eye. I have had hopes that she, like her sister, might pair off with a aristocrat; she ought to, and that's the truth. Now you coolly ask me to give up those hopes and hand her over to you—you ask it, who denied me a loan, a paltry assistance which would relieve me from much anxiety. Now, that refusal of yours sticks in my throat.

JASP. (*getting chair, and sitting, L. C.*) Well, if that is the obstacle to your swallowing me, governor, cough it up at once. You see, lending to Jack, Tom, or Bill is one thing, but lending to the individual we are expecting to call father is another.

Crow. Never shall it be said that I sell my child for a paltry two thousand pound!

JASP. Certainly not! and never shall it be said that I buy Meg. You shall have the paltry two thousand, governor, whether you ~~consent~~ or no.

Crow. Your generosity knocks me off my legs. (*rising*) Setting money out of the question, I will not oppose your visits.

JASP. (*rising*) Then I lend the money, and you consent; but there's neither buying nor selling.

Crow. (*shakes hands*) Your hand—when can I have the money?

JASP. (L. C.) The paltry two thousand? Whenever you like. When can I have Meg?

Crow. (R. C.) Whenever she likes. I won't interfere in her arrangements. Here she is—don't say anything to her about the money, or she'll fancy she's sold.

JASP. D'ye take me for a fool?

Crow. (R., *aside*) I do.

Enter MEG, from door L., with a letter in one hand, and in the other, which she conceals behind her, is a paper.

MEG. (*crossing at back*) Dad, here's your letter. (*gives it*; JASPER beckons her—she comes, C.)

JASP. (L.—*aside to MEG*) Done it—right as a plummet! Oh, Meg, what a happy day this is for me. (*goes up*)

CROW. (R.—*aside to MEG*) Meg, you've done it, right as a trivet!—keep it up—rare diversion! (*CROW goes up stage*) Now I'll post this, and meet Squire Merton, who will most likely come back with me. (*aside to JASPER—who is up stage, L.*) Let me have the—humph—in a hour.

JASP. (*aside to him*) Oh, the paltry two—all right!

Exit CROW, door in flat—JASPER comes forward, L.
MEG—I may go so far as to say, my Meg now—it's done! he has consented—we may consider ourselves engaged.

MEG. (R. C.) Oh, isn't it nice when you come to think of it? Whatever is the matter with your coat behind?

JASP. (L. C.) Rumpled?

MEG. No, your collar's sticking up; such a fright: turn round, and I'll put it down. (*she pins on his collar a paper on which is written in large print letters "ENGAGED"*) Keep still! there, that's evidently better—anybody can see that.

JASP. Mind, I shan't tell anybody I'm engaged yet. (*turns with his back to the audience*)

MEG. No, there's not the slightest occasion.

JASP. Not even Roly, though I'm sure he'll be as pleased as Punch to think I am so lucky; and I really don't know what there is in me for a girl like you, who could have picked from the whole parish, to take a fancy to; but if ever I play with your feelings, Meg, then I hope I may lose you; and that's as much as saying, I wish I may die. May I draw the foresaid kiss out of the bank now?

MEG. Wait till interest accumulates.

JASP. Then it must be at compounded interest, because I could make use of any amount just now. (*ROLAND appears at window in flat*) Oh, lor! here is brother Roly.

ROLAND. (*outside, at window*) Soh, I've found you, have I? Ah, in good company too. (*JASPER runs and opens the door*)

ROLAND enters and comes down, L.

Pardon my intrusion, Miss Rook—

JASP. (C.) Crow, Roley, Crow!

ROLAND. I would if I could; but I can't.

JASP. This is Miss Margaret Crow, the youngest daughter of Farmer Crow, Esquire. (ROLAND bows)

MEG. (R., *curtseys*) At your service, Mr. Turtle.

ROLAND. (*crosses to C.*) Turtle! My name is Pidgeon.

JASP. (L.) Lord! don't you see that's her fun, Roly? You'll relish it when you get as seasoned as I am.

ROLAND. Oh, we'll get used to one another, never fear; she'll find I'm as fond of joking as she is. (*to MEG*) You must take me over the farm: shew me the pigs and chickens, (live eggs and bacon)—lambs skipping about the fields—suggestive and poetical—makes one dream of mint sauce, Daphne and Phillis, green peas and gravy, to say nothing of pastorals suggested by the pretty guide! (*sings*)

"Father's a farmer, sir, she said—sir, she said."

"I'm glad that I came here, my pretty maid!"

MEG. (*sings*) "Nobody axed you, sir, she said!"

JASP. (*aside to ROLAND*) That's good, isn't it? I told you she was sharp, didn't I? (*crosses to C.—aside to MEG*) He's clever, isn't he?

ROLAND. (L., *seeing paper on JASPER's back*) Holloa, Jasper, you're engaged, are you?

JASP. (C., *turning sharply round*) How do you know that? Did you read it in the newspaper?

ROLAND. Yes; in a back impression.

JASP. (*aside to MEG*) Isn't he artful? (*to ROLAND*) You read it in my phizmahogany, I suppose?

ROLAND. And behind your back.

JASP. Ha! ha! behind my back—a queer direction!

ROLAND. Yes, it is a queer direction.

JASP. (C.) Well, you've hit the right nail on the head, anyhow. (*aside to MEG*) I think we may as well tell him. (*to ROLAND*) Your sagacity, brother, is something marvellous. I am engaged, and I'm proud to say to this dear girl—though mum! 'cause we don't want it known yet; friends are apt to make a joke of it.

ROLAND. (L.) Yes; it's so deuced kind of friends to do that, isn't it?

JASP. (C.) Don't bottle up your emotion, Ro'; congratulate a fellow, won't you?

ROLAND. To be sure. The Pidgeons ought to feel proud of the marked distinction conferred on one of the family, though I shan't forget, on some future opportunity, to pick a crow with the young lady.

JASP. Pick a crow—that's good; but, considering we are Pidgeons, I would say, avoid jocularity about names; you know, Roly, people might call us——

ROLAND. Carrier pigeons.

JASP. (C.) Or knock us down, and call us tumblers.

MEG. (R.) Oh, I don't see any harm in a jest.

ROLAND. (L.) Nor in making a man a jest book?

MEG. Some people have a peculiar talent for spoiling jokes.

ROLAND. (*crossing to c.*) Well, I won't spoil one; retaliation is my system, and I can be most unmerciful—even to a pretty girl.

JASP. (*to MEG*) He's down on you, because you called him Mr. Turtle. Give it him again, Meg, while I just run home to get something I promised the governor. I shan't be long. Don't be afraid of Roly; he's playful, but there's no vice in him.

Running up, c., and off, door in flat.

ROLAND. (L. C.) And will you suffer him to go like that, Miss Crow?

MEG. (R. C.) He's not such a simpleton as to mind a joke.

ROLAND. But, evidently, your object is to make everybody think him a simpleton.

MEG. Oh, goodness! pray don't make a crime out of such a trifle.

ROLAND. No; but I fear that is not the worst of it. He considers himself engaged, does he not?

MEG. That's the joke.

ROLAND. Oh, that's the joke! But you don't consider you are engaged?

MEG. How absurd! Of course not.

ROLAND. Now, that is no joke; tearing that inscription from his heart—simpleton as you think him—may give him more pain than tearing the label from his back.

MEG. What a superior Sunday school teacher would make. Do give me a lesson.

ROLAND. (*aside*) I will; and one you won't easily forget.

MEG. People who can't tell jest from earnest deserve to be played upon.

ROLAND. Oh, you think so? Well, shake hands; I won't be angry. Something convinces me that whoever is lucky enough to catch you, ought to be a happy fellow; but poor Jasper is not the man. Now, we are friends, are we not?

MEG. If you please; and I hope you won't think me cruel to your brother, for I do like him, and I'll beg his pardon—you see if I won't. My making him believe we were engaged, was more to divert my sister than myself.

ROLAND. Oh, your sister; she's at Madame Blanche's seminary, isn't she? I knew madame in Paris, and mean, when I have time, to look her up in Exeter; and—who knows?—I may there have the pleasure of making your sister's acquaintance.

MEG. Such a dear girl! Now she *is* a girl to admire if you like; but recollect, you mustn't fall in love with her, or Squire Merton will shoot you like a partridge. Oh, 'alk of the —

MERTON *passes window and enters door in flat.*

MERT. (*down, c.*) Your servant, Miss Exuberant. I'll wait here for your father, who is taking stock of his turkeys, and requires your assistance. (*turns and sees Roland*) Roland!

ROLAND. (L.) Soh, Philosopher Merton, you have not forgotten your comrade of the Boulevard?

MEG. (R.) Why, Mr. Merton, you never said you knew Jasper's brother, but since you are acquaintances, I'll leave you together, while I go and see what little turkeys are hatched. *Runs off, door in flat.*

MERT. (R.C.) You know, I imagine, what sort of footing I am on here?

ROLAND. (L.C.) About to amalgamate with the Crow family, eh?

MERT. Well, that will not be a surprise to you, who know my favourite theory—begin at the beginning, create, so to speak. I found in Miss Crow a young mind—

uncultivated indeed, but untampered with, and I conceived the project of forming it after my own theory. Why should not the female brain be braced by tonic education to masculine tension? (*sits R. of table*)

ROLAND. (*sits L. of table, R. C.*) But her heart——

MERT. I should wish my wife's heart trained, so to speak, even as my steed is trained to its *manège*—as I would break a horse, so would I break my wife's heart.

ROLAND. What?

MERT. I mean break in her heart, and break in her head; perhaps that's ambiguous—I merely mean that her thoughts and affections, should, with the loadstone's verticity, turn ever to me as her guiding point.

ROLAND. Sublime in theory, ridiculous in practice! Love is the only professor who can teach—what do you call it?—verticity. Has she any love for you?

MERT. Well, I fancy even that I am creating; and as one tests a gun before purchase, so I should like to prove her heart.

ROLAND. Yes, I've heard of such things as bursting hearts.

MERT. An experimental idea strikes me; you are personable enough for my purpose: do me a service—profess love—test her for me, will you?

ROLAND. An eccentric request, but when I see this spirited lady, I'll try if she's above proof, though I have first a little affair of my own with the saucy sister: she has turned my brother into public ridicule, and I mean to revenge the family insult *lege talionis*.

MERT. (*rises*) Serve her right! Why even I, Ashley Merton, am not secure from her rustic satire. Your brother, whom I believe to be a very worthy youth in his station, though, (by the-bye, he annoys me by calling me "hashed mutton," which I wish you'd correct him of—) your brother and I have had a transaction to-day.

ROLAND (*forward, L. C.*) He bought Mrs. Netwell's estate.

MERT. (*L. C.*) And I have given him a thousand pounds for his bargain. Now, why did I do this?

ROLAND. Because you coveted your neighbour's goods.

MERT. Because I am not satisfied with the house erected by my ancestors. I wish to build—to design—to create (so to speak) an edifice for myself.

ROLAND. Then why didn't you buy of Mrs. Netwell?

MERT. Simply because she would not sell her land to *me*. The fact is, the fair widow and I are not on a commercial footing since it has become known that I am modelling Cornelia Crow to be Mistress of Merton Hall. Well, I confess that I did previously entertain some idea of elevating Mrs. Netwell to that post, and she is not without qualifications; but a widow, pah! Had she been a widow of my own creating now—no, by-the-bye, that couldn't be.

ROLAND. Unless you had killed her husband.

MERT. Poor thing, how mortified she will be when she learns the Grange has fallen into my hands. I wouldn't meet her now for worlds.

CROW. (*without*) Don't attack me, ma'am; I know nothing about the affair. (*Crow appears at door in flat*) Oh, Mr. Merton is here; now you can have it out with him.

Enter CROW, followed by MRS. NETWELL, door in flat—

MRS. NETWELL goes down, c.—CROW remains at back, L. C., MERTON, extreme R., ROLAND, R. C.

MERTON. (*aside to ROLAND*) By Nemesis, here she is; she'll create a scene. (*ROLAND goes up stage*)

MRS. N. (L. C.) Soh, Mr. Merton, I am just informed that you have outwitted me, and obtained possession of Netwell, knowing that my object in selling it was to prevent you—you, above all persons, from acquiring it.

MERTON. (R. C.) My dear Sophia—

MRS. N. Oh, sir, you have acted in a very manly manner—very; you will enjoy your triumph, no doubt—you are—

CROW. (*coming down, c.*) Stop, stop! Situated as I am, ma'am, it would be most hurtful to my feelings to hear Mr. Merton blown up—I mean run down. Allow me to retire into the stock-yard. (*goes up*)

ROWLAND. (*up stage, R.*) I'll join you, and fraternize with the pigs. I'm the brother of Jasper Pidgeon.

CROW. (L. c.) Bless me how d'ye do? let's look at your moustachios; I've heard them extensively spoke of—come along!

Exeunt, CROW and ROLAND, door in flat.

MERT. (R.) Then, madam, you have followed me for the sole purpose of loading me with reproaches?

MRS. N. (L.) No, sir, I did not follow you; Mr. Crow, whom I met, informed me of your trick—now, Mr. Merton, you are a gentleman——

MERT. Granted.

MRS. N. And I am an unprotected widow.

MERT. Unprotected! can I do anything?

MRS. N. Do anything? have you not acted like an enemy? What have I done to you, that you should be my enemy? (*wipes her eyes*)

MERT. Good heaven! I am nobody's enemy—least of all yours! Have we not been brought up together—friends in youth—friends in maturity—friends in—no, we'll stop at maturity.

MRS. N. And yet, as you well know, my only motive in selling my property was to remove to some spot where, at least, I might be spared the pain of seeing you lead home a—a—Ashley, you have not behaved well to me; you know it, for you are a man of sagacity, not to say, intellect. I have good reason to entertain some little womanly resentment.

MERT. Resentment! what is there to resent?

MRS. N. Do you ask that—you? Did you not deliberately throw yourself in my widowed path—dazzle by your superior attainments—allure by your fascinations—

MERT. (*aside*) This woman is far above the average in intelligence.

MRS. N. And when you had created a sympathy—I admit it to you as a man of refined sentiment—which I had never before known, did I not suddenly hear that you had adopted a farmer's daughter to train for the position which—I appeal to you as a man of honour—you had given me reason to anticipate as my own?

MERT. Mrs. Netwell—Sophia—I confess I was culpable; I ought to have known that the gallantries of a ~~man~~ of my—as you suggest—intellect, are calculated to

make a more than ordinary impression. You are, to say the least, an appreciative woman, and I'll tell you what I'll do. You shall have Netwell Grange again at the price you sold it; the odd thousand I will cheerfully forfeit as fine for past indiscretion. Will that suffice?

MRS. N. I accept your offer; but, as I said, I cannot remain here; don't persuade me—my heart is broken! Oh, Ashley! that heart was so entirely yours, that you might have moulded it as you pleased.

MERT. Might I, indeed? I wish I'd known that; it is my ambition to create for myself.

MRS. N. And as for my little son—

MERT. There, you see, is a blow to my ambition.

MRS. N. But what grand original designs—I ask you as a man of genius—might be drawn on the unsullied surface of his young mind?

MERT. That's true; there's a delightful task for somebody. Will you take my arm, Sophia? and I will venture to offer my advice on the creation of a philosophic taste in youth. (*MRS. NETWELL takes his arm; as they are going up*)

Enter JASPER and ROLAND, door in flat.

JASP. (c.) Of all the ill-mannered beasts, the people in this village are the beastliest—everybody is shouting after me. (*sees MERTON*) Beg your pardon, Mr. Hashley Mutton, but do you see anything in my appearance to laugh at? (*to MRS. NETWELL*) or do you, ma'am?

MERT. (*at back, r. c.*) I see you are engaged.

JASP. Confound it—now you're at it! How do you know I'm engaged? How do all the other fools know it? How does the infant school know it? Is it writ on my back?

ROLAND. (*down l.*) It is! (*takes the paper from his back and shews it*)

JASP. (*thunderstruck*) And—was—that on my—back?

MRS. N. (*up stage, r. c.*) It was.

JASP. (c.) And she—yes, I remember now—she pretended to put my collar to rights. She did it!

MERT. (*r. c.*) Ah, my mechanical young friend, you've two important things to learn: don't call me "hash'd mutton," and don't lay yourself open to

practical jokes; the fact is, you've been making love to Margaret, which you might have known would only create diversion.

JASP. (*sadly*) I might!

ROLAND. (L.) Never mind, Jasper, she shan't get off scot free: we will have our joke.

JASP. No—no—I shall never—never——(*unable to proceed, he sits in a chair, c.*)

ROLAND. (*aside*) Poor fellow! poor fellow! (*turns up stage, L.*)

MERT. I am going to protect this lady through the meadows, for I noticed Crow's black bull was untethered. (*to ROLAND*) Pidgeon, I want to make an appointment with you, (*aside to him*) to arrange that test I proposed—you know what I mean?

ROLAND. Exeter to wit.

Exeunt, MERTON and MRS. NETWELL, door in flat.

ROLAND. (*to JASPER, slapping him on the back*) Cheer up, old fellow, never take a joke to heart!

Runs off, door in flat.

JASP. (*wiping his eyes*) The joke—no! but it's all over, the delicious dream is over—she—she—doesn't love me! What a double-distilled fool I was to think she did: she's too good for me, and she might have told me so in some other way than this. Oh Meg, Meg, no more *my* Meg! if you'd known how it would have crushed a poor fellow, you wouldn't have gone and done it. (*sobs*)

Enter MEG, door in flat.

MEG. Well, I declare, if your brother and Squire Merton arn't talking together as thick as thieves!—the Pidgeons are mounting! (*putting her hand on JASPER'S shoulder*) Why, Jasper, you look quite pale.

JASP. Yes, Meg; I have had a sort of turn, and I dare say I deserved it. I made a stupid mistake, but yours was a very good joke, Meg—a very ludicrous joke—one can't—ha! ha!—help laughing.

MEG. (*looking in his face*) And real tears are trickling down your cheek!

JASP. Nothing of the sort.

MEG. (R. c.) They are though. (*seeing paper on the floor*)

Oh, now I know what has annoyed you. It was very, very wrong of me, but I beg your pardon.

JASP. No, don't beg my pardon; it was a delicate way of telling me that I was a presumptive fellow, and I'm not in the least annoyed, Meg; but I wish that paper had been a pitch plaster on my mouth, and done for me. I feel very much as if I didn't care to live, but that's no fault of yours. Good bye, Meg! (*picks up paper and puts it in his breast pocket*) I shan't come again, but you'll find some other diversion. Good bye, I shall clear out of this place at once.

Exit, door in flat.

MEG. Poor Jasper! Why did I do this? He seems dreadfully cut up. I've behaved very cruelly, and how meekly he bears it. I'll call him back, I will, and beg him to forgive me. (*runs to the door, and is met by EYTEM*)

EYTEM. (*at door*) Is Jeremy Crow here?

MEG. (*L. of door*) It appears not, sir.

EYTEM. Are you one of Crow's girls?

MEG. I am one of Mr. Crow's young ladies.

EYTEM. Young ladies! what next?

MEG. Middle-aged ladies, I suppose, sir.

EYTEM. Pshaw! I don't come here to crack jokes. My name's Eytem.

MEG. (*coming forward, L.*) A serious Eytem.

EYTEM. (*coming forward, R.*) Hold your tongue, girl! Pepper, Gulp, and Eytem, solicitors, of Exeter, are not to be trifled with; there is something in this letter (*gives it*) which requires his instantaneous attention.

MEG. When he comes in, I dare say he'll attend to it on the spot.

EYTEM. He will, if he wishes to remain on the spot long, Miss Flippant. You may tell him from Pepper, Gulp, and Eytem—*emphatically*—that we have said in that letter neither more nor less than we mean. D'ye understand?

MEG. *Emphatically*—no!

EYTEM. Our clients are resolved to foreclose unless your father pays the two thousand by twelve to-day—*understand*—*to-day*.

MEG. You're mad! my father owe two thousand pounds?

EYTEM. That he does; and I am not mad.

MEG. Then my father is rich enough to pay it.

EYTEM. Well, for a rich man he has been trying to raise money uncommonly hard; but as Pepper, Gulp and Eytem happen to know, every money-lender in Exeter objects to his security.

MEG. Mr. Eytem, you're standing there and uttering an untruth—you know you are. (*Crow passes window*)

EYTEM. Thank you, miss; here comes your father—we'll see.

Enter Crow, door in flat.

CROW. (*down c.*) Oh, Pepper and Gollop, I have just posted a letter to you, naming to-morrow.

EYTEM. You'll find by the letter that young "lady"—hem!—holds, that to-morrow won't do. Pepper and Gollop, as you call us, are not to be trifled with.

CROW. (*reads*) "By twelve o'clock!" That's sharp; but you shall have the money by twelve o'clock.

MEG. (*L., to EYTEM*) There; I told you so.

EYTEM. (*R.*) I shall be close by for the next two hours. I have put up my mare at the Crown stables.

MEG. I was sure you had found a mare's nest.

EYTEM. (*up, c.*) You're a very forward young woman. Mr. Crow, I have to lodge a complaint; your daughter is wanting in respect, and I request that you will teach her, Pepper, Gulp, and Eytem are not to be trifled with.

Exit, door in flat.

CROW. (*seated at table, R. C.*) Where's Jasper Pidgeon?

MEG. (*L. C.*) Poor Jasper; we shall never see him again; he has found out my trick, and bid me good-bye for ever.

CROW. (*rising aghast*) What?

MEG. I'm sure he meant it, by his tone: the poor lad is heart-broken.

CROW. Then I'm ruined! (*sinks in arm chair*)

MEG. Ruined?

CROW. Mad—unlucky girl—you've done it! Jasper was going to lend me two thousand pounds.

MEG. (*L.*) And—and was this why you asked me to decoy him into the belief—

CROW. (*R.*) That I gave my consent. It was the only way to draw the money out of his pocket, and if I don't

have it in an hour, the farm and everything I call mine is lost. (*rising*) Go after him—bring him back! Promise him anything, but bring him back with the money! Let me only get that, then do what you please with him.

MEG. Oh, father, is this honest?

CROW. Bah! I'm not to be catechism'd by a girl. Go after him, I tell you.

MEG. Father, I can't do that.

CROW. Not to save us all from ruin?

MEG. Not to save us all from ruin? I have already behaved to him like a cruel heartless girl; but it was in ignorance of what I was doing. (*a loud knock*) Ah, that's his knock!

CROW. I thought he'd come back again. Now do your best for us.

MEG. What I do shall be at the bidding of my conscience. Oh, father, don't let us be false to Jasper.

CROW. Open the door. (*MEG opens door, and remains up stage*)

Enter JASPER, door in flat, and down, c.

JASP. (c.) I want just to speak to you, governor.

CROW. (r.) You can speak before my daughter.

JASP. Oh, can I? (*dejectedly*) Well, governor, I'm going away. This is no place for me. I'd nearly forgot that I gave my word you should have that money. (*giving a cheque*) There's a cheque. You'll find it all right, for I only paid it in yesterday.

CROW. Good lad! When do you want this?

JASP. Name your own time, and send it directed to me, "The Bush, Australia."

CROW. I'll give you bills at six and nine months before you go. Meg, where did that Eytam say I could find him?

MEG. (*down, l.*) At the Crown.

CROW. (*going up*) I'll go there, and as I come back I must tether the black bull; they tell me he's loose in the six acre field. Thankee, young Pidgeon, thankee!

Exit, door in flat.

JASP. (r. c.) Once more, good-bye, Meg; I shall often think of you and your jokes.

MEG. (L. C.) Jasper, I have done with joking, and my greatest sorrow is that I have made a sport of your feelings—you who have acted so nobly—so—(*falling at his feet*) Jasper, forgive me; My eyes are opened to my sin—for sin it was! say you forgive me!

JASP. Oh, don't! get up, do! I can't bear to see you in that way; it isn't natural; forgive you, what for? Get up, or I shall think you are making a diversion of me again.

MEG. Then you must think me worthless indeed; yet I can scarcely ask you to believe one who has had no pity in her mirth, but—

JASP. I won't say I forgive, bless'd if I do! Oh, get up, Meg—get up! (*lifts her up*) because I ought on my knees to ask your pardon for daring to think I could be more than a laughing stock for you; to fancy you could love such a simple rough fellow—I must have been a dribbling idiot.

MEG. I know you are rough, and simple, perhaps; but through that simplicity I admire a nobleness of heart, which must accomplish all you desire, even love—yea, Jasper, *love*;—and in that belief, and with all the truth which my lost mother tried to instil in my childish heart, I offer myself for—for your wife! If you reject me, the humiliation is deserved, for I have been a wayward, heedless girl:—I am so no more; take or refuse, but believe me sincere.

JASP. I do all that, Meg; and you know there can be no sunshine in my life like the thought that you really would one day be Mrs. Pidgeon; but the question is, for I've gained thirty years experience in the last thirty minutes, can you love me?

MEG. Indeed, gratitude alone might—

JASP. Aye, there it is. The substantial love *I want* is not made out of such vincer as gratitude. Bother gratitude! Now, look here, Meg; I won't take any advantage of you whilst you're under that impression; but think the matter over coolly—do, dear Meg—ask your heart a question or two; tell it that taking a husband, may be on a long lease, and one ought to be sure that the taxes *will not be too heavy*. I'll tell you what I'll do. *This day three months* I'll put the question to you again,

and then say truefully and fearlessly whether you love me as a husband should be loved, or *vice versy*.

MEG. Always kind, Jasper; but do you think if I were not sure of what was dawning here, (*places her hand on her heart*) any amount of gratitude would make me offer you a hand that you might not take as a pledge for all the rest?

JASP. I do hope so; I do, indeed. But as nothing is certain but death and quarter day, let us only be as we used to, till the day comes. Don't say a word about it to anybody—not even to brother Ro.

MEG. Only to my father—I can't deceive him! and, Jasper, (*looking down*) you—you—you may draw that little amount out of the bank now.

JASP. (*kisses her*) The first time! Oh, it's like “sipping the necktie of the Gods,” as the song-book says; but what a remarkably short pleasure it is; never mind, the time may come when Lips and Company will be a bank that won't stop, draw on it as much as I will; and won't I draw—without any check! (*shouts heard without*) Holloa! there's a shindy in the farm yard!

MEG. (*going to door*) Oh, whatever has happened to father? here's your brother carrying him on his back.

JASP. I hope Roly's not making an ass of himself—one in a family is quite enough. (*shouts again outside*)

Enter ROLAND, door in flat, with CROW on his back; he places CROW in arm chair, R. C. up stage, and stands, R. —JASPER, up stage, L.—MEG goes to her father—VILLAGERS, who have followed on, remain at door and window.

ROLAND. (*to Meg*) Don't alarm yourself; he's all right. His left leg gored a little.

MEG. Gored! who did it?

ROLAND. The bull—the black bull, and nothing but the bull! I never saw such “lusty, lusty horns,” in my life; horns indeed! more like ophicleides.

CROW. This young gentleman has saved my life: the bull had me down—one horn in my mouth, and the other in my breeches pocket, when he rushed to my rescue, waving his red handkerchief—

ROLAND. Like a matadore, barring the pumps and silk stockings.

CROW. Drew off the bull, and dodged him round the field! I never saw such pluck and activity in my life.

ROLAND. Yes, I'm up to a dodge or too.

CROW. I don't recollect any more, for I was stunned, till I found I was being carried home pick-a-back. Meg, my girl, thank him for your father's life; another moment and it would have been all dicky with Jerry Crow. Pidgeon's brother, you shall stay here and feast for a month.

ROLAND. So I will; I am dotingly fond of new laid eggs.

CROW. Oh, Meg will see to that.

ROLAND. And milk—real milk, direct from the cow.

CROW. Meg, don't forget Pidgeon's milk.

JASPER. (L. c.) Didn't I tell you he was a noble fellow? talk about a lion's heart—what's that to a Pidgeon's pluck? (MEG and ROLAND come forward)

MEG. (L. c.) Mr. Pidgeon, we owe my father's life to your bravery; I have not grateful words strong enough—(*kisses his hand*) May heaven bless you! (ROLAND *kisses her*)

JASP. (*aside, at back, c.*) He's kissed her; and so have I—so have I!

CROW. Jasper, come here—this precious leg must be looked to. (JASPER goes to him)

ROLAND. (R. c., *aside to MEG*) Oh, Meg—Meg—may I call you Meg? darling Meg—


MEG. Sir!

ROLAND. (*intensely, but in a low tone to her*) I LOVE
1 P?

(*Music—Tableau—CROW and JASPER, R. c., at back
—ROLAND and MEG, L. c., forward—VILLAGERS
at back.*)

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Garden and exterior of Crow's Farm; house entrance with rustic porch, L. 2 E., beyond which an oblique wall-piece, overgrown with ivy, &c., joins garden palings of irregular height, which cross the stage at back from R. to L; a gate in the palings, R. C.; in the foreground are gravel paths and flower beds (made out); a rustic seat, R. C. The extreme backing presents an extensive view of rich Devonshire scenery.*

 *The scene and lights are arranged with a view to introduce Calderon's picture of "Broken Vows."*

Enter from farm house, EYTEM, followed by CROW—EYTEM while speaking, ties up papers with red tape.

EYTEM. (R. C., at seat) Then now, Mr. Crow, you are, as one may say, out of your difficulties.

CROW. (L. C.) Out of my difficulties? yes by losing half my farm.

EYTEM. Losing, pooh! we can't eat our pie and have our pie, as the saying is; I'm sure I've purchased of you at a very fair price.

CROW. Half the mortgage money—

EYTEM. And a little over.

CROW. But I hope you'll let me have a rental of the land, and then nobody need know that I have sold it.

EYTEM. Candidly, we considered the farm too large to be worked by a man without capital; however I'll consult my partner, who is now in the village, and let you know in an hour. Where is young Jasper Pidgeon to be found?

CROW. Oh, he'll be here by-and-bye.

EYTEM. I have news for him.

CROW. Good or bad?

EYTEM. Both, but the latter predominates, for which I am extremely sorry; I like the lad—knew his thrifty uncle from boyhood, and more than that, Jasper once saved my life.

CROW. And his brother mine! the saving propensity runs in the family. But what is this here news you have to tell him?

EYTEM. That's my business.

CROW. Well, don't snub a poor widower.

EYTEM. What have I to do with your widowerhood?

CROW. I had a large farm once, but you have taken my better half. (*looks off, R. U. E.*) Here comes Sir Ashley Merton—and who's that with him? Mrs. Netwell again; he's always gallivanting with *her* now.

EYTEM. You don't mean that?

CROW. They used to be enemies; but she's a sly puss, she is.

EYTEM. (*R.*) What do you mean, sir, by calling that lady a cat? do you know, sir, you are speaking of a client of ours? She's a clever woman, sir, if you mean that—a very clever woman.

CROW. (*L. C.*) No match for *you* though, I'll be bound.

EYTEM. How dare you hazard such a remark as that? I don't see why we shouldn't make a very good match.

CROW. Hilloa, lawyer! you're letting the cat out: I only meant that being a client of yours, she's like a rat in mouth of a terrier.

EYTEM. Now you compare that lady to a rat, sir? Do you know that's actionable? Pepper, Gulp, and Eytem, are not to be trifled with.

Enter MERTON and MRS. NETWELL from back R., and appear at gate, c.

MERTON. (*at gate*) Well, Mr. Crow, did you want to see me?

CROW. (*going up*) I did, Sir Ashley. May I beg the use of your ears for a few moments.

(*CROW and SIR ASHLEY remain in conversation at gate—EYTEM, who has gone up, comes forward with MRS. NETWELL*)

EYTEM. (*L. C.*) Mrs. Netwell! I congratulate on having possession of the Grange again.

MRS. N. (*R. C.*) Thanks to my magnanimous friend, Sir Ashley.

EYTEM. (*aside to her*) Forgive my abruptness; but I am in great anxiety to enquire, my dearest Mrs. Netwell, if you have made up your mind as to the proposal ventured to make three months ago? You said, with

grace peculiar to yourself, you would "take time to consider."

MRS. N. Give me a little more grace, my dear solicitor—only a little.

EYTEM. Commiserate my suspense; make it brief. Till when?

MRS. N. Well, till—till—when shall I say? We'll say till Mr. Crow's eldest daughter is married to my friend, Sir Ashley—

EYTEM. What have we to do with them?

MRS. N. Nothing; only report says it is soon to be, therefore you shall soon have a positive "yes" or "no." *(they turn up stage)*

MERT. *(to CROW—at gate)* We'll say in a quarter of an hour then.

CROW. I'll be back. *(going to house, L.)*

EYTEM. *(up near gate)* Crow, I'm going in search of that lad Pidgeon. I'll see you again on the subject we were speaking of.

Bows to MRS. NETWELL and exit, through gate and off R.—Exit CROW into house, L.

MERT. *(R. C.)* Then we can have a few minutes' chat in Crow's garden, Sophia; I'm glad I met you—and how is your dear little boy?

MRS. N. *(L. C.)* Quite well! he was prattling of you yesterday, and all I can do, he will insist upon calling you Papa. *(MERTON and MRS. NETWELL walk about garden during their conversation)*

MERT. Well, let him—I rather like it.

MRS. N. Oh, but it isn't proper; though to be sure, in superintending the development of his mind, you are acting like a papa. He's a dear child, and poor fellow, how fond he is of you!

MERT. Nice boy—very! I am getting interested in him, and shall not like to relinquish my influence.

MRS. N. Your suggestions are so judicious—even I—I say even I adopt them. Do you know, on your hint, I am studying Natural Philosophy! *(they sit on garden seat, R. C., MERTON L., MRS. NETWELL, R.)*

MERT. Are you really?

MRS. N. And mathematics.

MERT. You don't say so? What, Euclid?

MRS. N. Yes, and I've crossed the Pons——

MERT. Asinorum? Oh, if that's the case I must take you in hand, my dear Sophia.

MRS. N. But I feel I am trifling with my own happiness in yielding to the fascinations of your guidance.

MERT. Sophia, I'll go so far as to say, I wish I had known your ductility a year ago.

MRS. N. And why?

MERT. Why? Oh, no matter! I am compromised—I must make the best of it. I have pledged my honour to this farmer Crow to marry his daughter, and, to tell you the truth, I am here now, at his request, to settle the day for——

MRS. N. Oh, say no more—I knew it would be so! All is over—I'm a wretched woman! (*sobs*)

MERT. No, no, dear Sophia, don't weep! You can always cherish my image, you know—in fact, I wish you to cherish my image.

MRS. N. Oh yes, I can weep over your *carte-de-visite*; but where is the mind—the gigantic mind?

MERT. (*aside*) What uncommon appreciation she has!

MRS. N. You—you love this girl?

MERT. No; don't labour under that error—that task I shall set myself after marriage, provided I find I have first created the sympathy in her.

MRS. N. But I have no right to murmur; you have never loved me, you could not!

MERT. Yes, I could: in fact, if I were not situated as I am, I might say I do; but honour—the honour of a Merton! I am sorry for what I have done—let that console you; but honour!

MRS. N. And you will marry her without knowing if she loves you? Well, for a philosopher you are the rashest man——(*they both rise*)

MERT. (R. C.) Stop! stop! Sir Ashley Merton may act a daring part; but a rash one—never! I have commissioned a friend to test her—in fact, to try if she be susceptible to the protestations of a more meretricious object than myself, so to speak; if she passes scathless through the ordeal, in a month she will be lady of Merton Hall.

MRS. N. (*R., taking his hands*) And, Ashley, may you be happy! I dare scarcely hope it; but may you be happy! Let me go, I have listened too long. (*crossing in front and up C. to gate*)

MERT. (*following her to L. of gate*) Where are you going?

MRS. N. Home—anywhere—to study philosophy.

MERT. Or mathematics—Don't take my affair too much to heart; you see I have, as it were, half crossed the stream, where retreat is cut off; I stand in the middle of a bridge—

MRS. N. The *Pons Asinorum*.

Exit, R. C.

MERT. She's a dear creature, and loves me unquestionably; but I must forget her—Oh, here comes my agricultural father-in-law, in cord breeches. (*crosses over to R. C., and sits*)

Enter CROW, from house, R., and down, L. C.

CROW. (*L. C.*) Critikising my garden, Sir Ashley? ah, it's awful neglected; Meg seems to take no delight in it lately; I don't know what's come over the wench, she mopes about and does nothing. Well, now, baronet, touching my Cornelia; (*sits L., beside MERTON*) it's time to come to an understanding; the girl has worked hard to accomplish her accomplishment—and she loves you.

MERT. (*looks at CROW, and rises*) Does she?

CROW. No mistake about it; she asked after your favourite poodle, in her last letter. (*rises*) Well, you know it's no use shilly-shallying; when a thing is to be done, let it be done. Now, what say you to take a stroll round the meadows, and fix the day?

MERT. (*going up to gate*) Since it must be so—come along.

CROW. (*going up*) Don't say "must be so," 'cos it's the only manly, upright way of acting—excuse me, I'm a straight-forward, honest fellow—and that's the truth.

MERT. (*at gate*) Don't say "that's the truth," because it implies that your veracity is unusual.

Exit through gate and off, R.

CROW. (*following him*) Oh, I'm not out of temper; don't imagine for a moment I'm speaking with voracity.

Exit at gate, and off, R.

Enter MEG, from farm, L.—a marked change in her manner and appearance.

MEG. (*sits disconsolately*) The day has come—this day I have so dreaded; and he is so confiding—so kind, that I don't know how to tell him the terrible truth. For months he has been happy in the expectation of to-day's assurance that he is loved. Were he only to ask me to marry him, I would! I would, though my heart should break; but he won't do that: nothing but a kindred affection would satisfy Jasper, whose own is so entire. I feel like a guilty girl—miserable, miserable!

JASPER *appears from L. U. E., at gate, c.*

JASPER. (*singing*) "Gin a corpus, meet a corpus," it says—how are you, Meg?

MEG. (*on seat, R. c.*) Ah! Jasper, is that you?

JASP. (*at gate*) I'm under the impression that it is: didn't I tell you that quarter day was one of those things that are certain to come? May a corpus come into the garden, Meg?

MEG. Oh, Jasper, you know you are welcome.

JASP. (*coming forward, L. c.*) Well, come, but am I wanted? That's the question. Would you have been vexed if I had not come?

MEG. What can I say?

JASP. What can you say? Come, that's a good 'un! "Yes" is a contemptible little word, but sometimes it's a whole dictionary of happiness, and don't be afraid to say it, Meg. I think that patient individual, Jasper, deserves a little encouragement, for he has kept his word—hasn't he? For three months I have seen you almost every day with my heart in my mouth—all that I cared for in the wide world near me—and I have tried not even to think of love; but lord, I might as well have tried to eat without swallowing. I tried not to notice you, but I noticed all the more that you were changing, so meek and so beautiful, that I began to fear it was an impos-

D

bility that you could ever belong to me. This is the day, you know, Meg, when I was to have my sentence.

MEG. Your sentence, Jasper?

JASP. Don't repeat my words—don't lose time, my girl—every moment is a month to me! Oh, I forgot; I was to put the question plain. Well, here it is—do you *now* love me as a husband ought to be loved? (*a pause*) Did you hear me, Meg? I can't say it again, for there's such a thumping under my waistcoat, and such a walnut in my throat—and, as you see, such a trembling all over me, that—

MEG. Jasper—I—I—

JASP. What ails you, my Meg?—how ill you look! Well, then, don't say anything now—take another week; I'll bear it.

MEG. (*rises*) Good, noble Jasper!—no, not another moment. (*placing her hand in JASPER'S*) If you wish me to be your wife, I will try to be an affectionate one—I will indeed!

JASPER. (L. C.) Try!—try! (*dropping her hand*) Meg, that word—is—like a May blight: if you can't call that back again, don't say any more. Love doesn't come by trying; we don't know how it comes—it's there, and we can't help it.

MEG. (R. C.) And so it was with me!

JASP. With you? then you do love—and—and—not me?

MEG. And if death were my punishment, it would be just. I have wickedly listened to another in the belief that there was no peril, and when too late I found I was no longer mistress of my will; and—and I would not have told you this, Jasper, if I could deceive you! I hate myself, but I will not deceive you!

JASP. Hush, Meg—hush! I have often tossed on my pillow with a sort of superstition of what was to come, and I have reasoned with myself how to bear it; you shall see I am a man! I have gone through such a trial as few could bear; but there—you see I—I hear it; and bear it—don't I? It was not to be! Who is the *happy man*?

MEG. Your brother.

JASP. Roly! I see all now;—the pair of scales has

dropped from my eyes. Ah! he deserves you—he's better than me, Meg. He didn't know what had passed between us, or he wouldn't have done it for the world; I'm sure he wouldn't—bless him!—and you too—he's better than me!

Crow, from R., appears at the back.

CROW. Hi! Jasper—look out! the Exeter coach has pulled up at the Crown, and your brother is on the box, as large as life, (*looks off, L.*) now he's down, and—and handing out our Nelly; come along, we'll run over and meet them. (*calling off*) How are you? I'm coming.

Exit, L. U. E.

JASPER. Roly, there! I can't see him just yet, it's too much. I'll go through the house, and collect myself in the poultry yard. You needn't let him know, Meg, that I was at all knocked over by what you have told me, because, poor fellow, he may feel hurt, you know; so I'll go, and try to put on a jocular expression—it's all right.

Exit into house, L.

Enter Crow, at gate, from L. U. E.

CROW. Look alive, Meg! they've had no breakfast—run in, and toss up something for the famished travellers—a few bacon and eggs, or—no, a slice of eggs and bacon—I say, deuced odd their coming from Exeter together, isn't it? I wonder if they knew it? Why, how you stand, looking as pale as a ghost! (*crossing over to L.*) Come in, and see Lady Nelly—hang'd if she doesn't look like a duchess.

Hurries into farm, L. 2 E.

MEG. Two months since I have heard that earnest voice, which made me false to my deep resolves—that voice, still on my ear so persuading—so true! I shall again listen to answer—yes—answer to him now; though I must not tell what a hard struggle between love and and conscience I have had—for his sake!

ROLAND. (*speaking at back, L.*) Don't! don't go in yet; I must—I will speak with you first.

MEG. (*goes towards palings, L. C.*) Ah! 'tis he! his foot-step, and—some one is with him. How foolishly un-
served I am at meeting—I—

CORNELIA. (*outside, L. U. E.*) Be quick then, dear Roland; my sister will think it so strange if I delay rushing into her arms.

MEG. That—that is **Cornelia's** voice—*she is with him.*

ROLAND and CORNELIA *appear behind the palings, L. C., a portion of the top of which being broken, admits of their faces being seen.*

ROLAND. Cornelia, my own, we must decide how we are to act. I am for plain, straightforward dealing; leave me to break the matter to Merton and your father—darling Cornelia! I love you tenderly—deeply; and you have confessed your love for me!

MEG. Powers of mercy! what do I hear? (*staggers against wall piece, L. U. E.*)

CORN. Do as you think best, Roland. Give me that flower as a pledge that you will never be any but mine. I should die—I'm sure I should—were I to lose you! You are my first and last love!

ROLAND. Ever mine! (*holds up a flower, and as she attempts to take it, he kisses her—MEG places her hand to her heart—Music—this realizes the picture of "Broken Vows"*) Then I have your sanction to break it to them at once?

CORN. Yes, dear; but I must go in, I must indeed. You'll follow soon, won't you, my Roland?

Disappears, L. U. E.

MEG. (*totters forward, L. C.*) The world is gone—is lost! Oh, if I could die—if I could die!

ROLAND. (*who enters through gate, c.*) Holloa! Meg—frolicsome Meg here! (*aside*) She has heard; well, so much the better. (*aloud*) My—my hoaxing little friend Meg, here I am back again! give me your hand, beguiler of my idle hours. (*approaches—offering hand*)

MEG. (*L. C., recoiling*) No, no! touch me not—touch me not! sooner would I—(*aside*) I am choking, stifling—touch me not!

Staggers into house, L. 2 E.

ROLAND. So, so! I have avenged our family honour there, at any rate. Well, the puss deserved it; but I didn't expect I had struck so deeply—in fact, I have my *qualms* as to the manliness of hoaxing to such an extent

but she'll get over it. I'll remind her of all she did to poor Jasper. Oh, she deserves the lesson unquestionably. But there's another difficulty: how shall I extenuate my conduct to Merton—Sir Ashley Merton as he is now? The paint brush of circumstance has certainly daubed me a villainous colour, but I love Cornelia—I adore her, and I can't help it; he shouldn't have set me such a dangerous task—man is but man. Oh, he's another deserving object; he deserves it all! I'll brazen it out—fight him if needs must.

MERT. (*at gate from R. U. E.*) I saw the coach rounding the corner, and, deuce take me, if I didn't think it was a Pidgeon's torso on the box. (*Enters, and down R. C.*) Well, my friend—for I have created you the friend of my bosom—how are you, friend?

ROLAND. (*L. C., aside*) Friend! Hear this, ye gods!

MERT. Not to lose time—did you—did you execute that—that little commission for me?

ROLAND. Commission! What do you mean, Sir Ashley, by commission? Do you take me for a commercial traveller?

MERT. I mean that delicate little test—the test of my wife *in posse*.

ROLAND. I did, sir. She does not love you!

MERT. What?

ROLAND. No, sir! I am prepared for the volcano of your indignation. Vomit your lava—let your crater gape! She does not love you.

MERT. My dear fellow——

ROLAND. Sir, she loves another! Yes, I see the gathering storm-cloud on your brow—let it burst! She loves another!

MERT. My dear fellow——

ROLAND. That other is *me*—your tool, sir—your *fool*, as you thought, but I only say “tool.” I leave you to call me names. “Villainous scoundrel!—treacherous rascal!” are on your tongue. Uncork your adjectives—I'm prepared for them.

MERT. My dear fellow——

ROWLAND. And I love her, madly—overwhelmingly—you'd like to dash me to the earth; I can see you'd like

to dash me—dash away, if you like, I'm prepared to be dashed!

MERT. My dear——

ROLAND. True love—the genuine article has eclipsed your Brummagem philosophy, and maddened you—you know not what you say—you are about to tear your hair—root it out—throw it in my face—I'm prepared!

MERT. (*coolly wiping his head, which is bald*) My dear fellow, I'm very much obliged to you.

ROLAND. Eh?

MERT. (R. C.) In fact if money were in question, there would be no pecuniary bounds to my gratitude; you have freed me from a nightmare.

ROLAND. (L. C.) How sir, do you call that sweet girl a nightmare? Hang your knightly impudence!

MERT. She is, I grant, a sweet creature, but I know a sweeter.

ROWLAND. How dare you assert there's a sweeter creature on the face of the earth? Anything sweeter would be nauseous.

MERT. Now don't be unreasonable, when I congratulate and thank you for doing me an unlooked-for kindness.

ROLAND. What do you mean by kindness? Any man of right feeling would have gone into a passion about it—and now I think of it, I ought to call you to account for your duplicity to that dear girl.

MERT. Has all the duplicity been on my side? Come, be contented, my friend, that fortune favours you.

ROLAND. No; I wanted to do something for her sake! I wanted to quarrel about her, and you've baulked me in a most ungentlemanly manner.

Enter CORNELIA from house, L.

MERT. (R.) Cornelia! Cornelia! I'm delighted to see you looking so charmingly; but why do you turn first crimson and then pale as a lily?

CORN. (*who has gone down, C., runs to ROLAND*) Oh! save me—save me! he'll kill me! I know he will. See he's fumbling in his waistcoat for a weapon. Save me!

ROLAND. (*putting her over to L.*) Oh! I've tamed him; We've had an awful row, but I've tamed him.

MERT. (R.—to CORNELIA) So you have deserted the worthy fellow who wanted to create a female prodigy, and substituted another worthy fellow with a prodigious quantity of love. You are right, my child; and if future friendship is not objectionable, Sir Ashley Merton is yours to command. I will not intrude upon the privacy of true lovers. Good-bye for the present!

Exit through gate and off, R.

CORN. (L.) There's a disgraceful way of turning me off: I call that insulting!

ROLAND. (C.) Do you, my darling? Then I'll make him apologize! (*going up to gate—calling*) Hi! you, sir! you uncommonly placid knight—you K.C.B.—or whatever you call yourself—come back and apologize!

Runs through gate and off, R.

CORN. I never cared anything for him; but one doesn't like to be held so cheaply as that in the presence of one's lover, who would have valued one the more for a *fracas*.

Enter MEG, door L. 2 E.—seeing Cornelia, is turning back.

CORN. Come here, sister dear, I want to speak to you. (*brings her forward*) You look so ill, dear, that I'm quite grieved; and you've scarcely exchanged one word with your poor Cornelia—what is wrong? Are you angry with me about anything?

MEG. (L. C.) Oh, no!

CORN. (R. C.) Well then, kiss me.

MEG. Yes.

CORN. Yes, but you don't! You always were the first to embrace the sister you said you were proud of, and are you not proud of me still? Ah, then I must kiss *you*. (*kisses MEG*)

MEG. (*falling on her neck and sobbing*) Oh, Cornelia! Cornelia!

CORN. That's right, darling; if you have a sorrow, share it with Cornelia—Oh! I must tell you my secret—something that will really astewish, perhaps displease you, but it couldn't be helped. Sit down, I'll open my heart to you by way of example. (*places MEG on garden seat, and sits R. of her*) Meg, you know how I obeyed my father's wish, and consented to sacrifice myself to a man I could

never love. *Never love!* Meg, those are hard words for a girl of eighteen to brood over; but now, sister, I *do* love—I love another so truly, that my whole life is bound up in his—that man is Roland. Oh, how white you are, and how your lips quiver! Don't you approve of it, Meg?

MEG. (*with effort*) May you never know what it is to lose the man you love so tenderly!

CORN. But why should you hint at such a dreadful thing? I would stake my life on his fidelity—he is incapable of deceit.

MEG. Others may have thought the same.

CORN. For shame, Margaret! You would have me think I am not the first who has listened to Roland's vows; and if so, what do I care to whom he has been false, so long as I know he is true to me?

MEG. Is favoured love so pitiless? But if he should be sporting with your credulity?

CORN. Nonsense! All people are not adepts at such sport as you are; and the girl who cannot distinguish sincerity from seeming deserves to be trifled with—her blind vanity claims no pity.

MEG. Sister—sister, what have you to depend on but oaths which may be false, intensity which may be feigned? For there are men who can act such love, and glory in hypocrisy. Even he——

CORN. (*rising*) Even he! Say no more, or I shall hate you, Meg! You would like to fill my mind with base suspicions, but you shan't; for were it true, there would fall such a blight on all my life to come, as even you would grieve at—you who have resolved, in your little way, to poison our happiness. *You have never loved!*

MEG. (*L., rising*) Oh, Cornelia, Cornelia, prove him! Hold back your heart, my own darling sister, till you are sure. Appeal to his mercy—to his manhood; and if—if he really loves you, then, as you say, why care whom else *he has deceived?* Take him—be happy—and all my *hope be with you!*

CORN. (*R.*) Why, one would think to hear you talk, *that you were giving me something of your own; but, if*

you are not jealous of my conquest, you will befriend me with papa, won't you? he will be so angry! (*JASPER appears at door of farm, L.*) I declare, here is Jasper Pidgeon, looking quite civilized and refined. Meg, you recollect that famous trick you practised on him?

MEG. Silence, Cornelia! if I have ever repented a heartless act, it is that. Never, if you would spare me tears of shame, speak of that crime again.

CORN. (*aside*) She loves him! as I live, she loves him! (*aloud*) Well, I'm sorry we imposed upon the poor fellow, because, after all, he is the brother of my Roland. (*JASPER, who has crossed at back, goes down, R.*) Soh, my learned brother, and how has the world used you?

JASP. (*glancing at MEG*) Mine was a very small world, Miss Cornelian, and it used me as well as circumstances over which it had no control would let it.

CORN. (C.) Well, Jasper, I am not going away again, and I hope to see you very often, for I mean to grow very fond of you.

JASP. Yes, do, because I shall be a sort of relation; not one that you'll care to brag about, but still——

CORN. (*going up*) Ah, he has told you already; here he comes; doesn't he look handsome, Meg? I'm sure, Jasper, you ought to be proud of him.

MEG. (*going towards farm, L.*) I—I am wanted; let me go into the house.

JASP. And would you mind going with her, Miss Cornelian? The fact is, I want to speak to Roly confidential.

CORN. (*up stage, L. C.*) Yes; but use adverbs, don't call me Cornelian, and don't call him Roly. (*going into house, turns to MEG who is standing by the door*) You wouldn't like him called "Roly," if he belonged to you, would you? such a noble fellow, isn't he?

Exit CORNELIA, followed by MEG, into farm, L.

Enter ROLAND, from R., and through gate.

ROLAND. (*down, R.*) Ah, Jasper, boy, here I am, you see, well and happy.

JASP. (L.) So you ought to, Roly; if ever a man had a right to be, you have. (*grasping his hand*) You are loved by an angel, Ro; be good to her! What an

I am to say such a thing—of course you will! I con-son-grat—Well, that's a hard word for me to say; but you know what I mean.

ROLAND.—Yes, she has told you already; you're right, I am a lucky fellow. By-the-bye, have you heard from Eytem to-day?

JASP. No.

ROLAND. He has bad news for you, lad, but don't be cast down. You shan't want for money.

JASP. Oh, I know what you mean—that paltry money—a fleabite!

ROLAND. Fleabite?

JASP. The thousand I cleared by Mrs. Netwell's estate Eytem persuaded me to throw into a healthy Australian Company—so healthy that it's burst itself I suppose—never mind.

ROLAND. No, it isn't that.

JASP. Then never mind what it is now. When you are married—to—to—Meg, brother, you shall have joint stock in all that I've got, and—

ROLAND. Married to Meg! What are you thinking about? I care nothing about Meg.

JASP. Don't jest, Roly; I know all—Meg loves you, and a king might hold his royal head a little higher at that.

ROLAND. Ha! ha! ha! What, have you been sold too? Pooh! pooh! lad—she derided—insulted you; I swore internally that I would pay her back in her own spurious coin—and I did; the finest bit of counterfeit you ever saw. I declared that I loved her—that I lived but for her—hers and hers only—without her, most lonely, and a lot more balderdash so artistically delivered, that, hang me, if she didn't believe it.

JASP. You did this? you?

ROLAND. (*taking JASPER's hand*) For my brother's sake, my boy—

JASP. (*snatching his hand away*) Then you're a villain—a cowardly cruel villain!

ROLAND. Hilloa!

JASP. You own, deliberate, to have made a good—
affectionate girl wrongfully believe you loved her.

ROLAND. Didn't she do the same to a good, affectionate brother of mine?

JASP. What's that to you, if I choose to let her?

ROLAND. Didn't she ticket your innocent back?

JASP. What's my innocent back to you, if I like to be ticketed?

ROLAND. Well, there certainly is something fascinating about the little gipsy, but——

JASP. (*earnestly*) Roly, you mustn't break her heart: you *shan't*! If you are a gentleman—and I have felt rather proud that we had *one* in the family—if you are a gentleman, you must act like one.

ROLAND. But a gentleman can't fall in love simply because you command it.

JASP. He can! you must! Oh, brother, that is no difficult task with her; the more you know her, the more you'll find you can't help it.

ROLAND. But I love another——

JASP. It's false! it's false!

Enter MEG, unseen by them from the farm, L., and remains up stage.

Roly, Roly, I have thought you better than other men—prove that you are; I love you; but all the brothers in the world are nothing to me where she is concerned. Wrong her, and I'm your deadly enemy—and that I shouldn't like to be to you, Roly. Perhaps you shrink from a girl who hasn't a purse! then what I have is yours—take it freely—I want nothing! Ro, this is no brag, I mean it; but carry out the hopes you have raised in that poor girl's heart.

ROLAND. I tell you I am pledged to her sister.

JASP. Her sister?

ROLAND. Cornelia, and as to your generosity, dear boy, I am sorry to break the news in the midst of your anger, but you have nothing! Elytem has just discovered, what I all along suspected—our uncle made a recent codicil, *stating that though some little folly of mine had incensed him, he forgave and left all to me.*

JASP. And take it! What is wealth to me who has

no one to share it? But won't *you* prove yourself worthy of it, by acting with honour to Meg?

ROLAND. Once for all, I can't!

JASP. Then, brother, be hanged! you are no brother of mine, and I have no means of revenging poor Meg's wrong but by this arm which before now has fought for justice in the workshop, and thrashed a rascal as I will you—yes, *you!* (*throws off his coat*) The name of a penniless mechanic—the name of his father, is disgraced by a gentleman! Let manhood be the referee—come on! (*MEG rushes between them, c.*)

MEG. (*c.*) Jasper, for my sake, no! I have heard all, with what utter change of feelings I have no words to tell; but were he free from every other tie, could affection deeper than that he so admirably feigned possess this gentleman at your bidding—I should reject him, because—I love no longer! the magic has melted—the infatuation is over! (*to ROLAND*) Sir, though I truly feel this, don't think it is said in anger. I richly merited your unsparing lesson, and if I am a wiser girl for the future, 'tis you, perhaps, I have to thank. There is my hand. I ask one favour in waking from this foolish dream—don't let your triumph over me be mentioned to my sister!

ROLAND. (*R.*) I promise, Meg, faithfully, for I'm not at all vain of the part I have played; if Jasper had thrashed me it would have served me right, though 'tis as well that Pidgeons of one family shouldn't "fall out, and chide, and fight," as Doctor what's-his-name says.

MEG. And since kindred had nearly been forgotten on my account, let me restore the link. (*joins their hands*) Remember, Jasper, your brother was your champion.

JASP. (*L.*) A pretty sort of champion to go in right and left at a woman—excuse me for calling you a woman, Meg; but if I see you pining about him, my glue pot will boil over again; I will see you the Meg I used to know, before I cross the briny ocean.

MEG. Stay here, Jasper.

ROLAND. Of course he will; he offered to share his *sum total* with me, and he shall find that I can do simple *division* in my sums as well as he can.

JASP. Not a pound, Ro. (*crosses to c.*) I'll hand you over all I have had; but there's one thing troubles me—I have lent two thousand pounds.

ROLAND. Cornelia has told me all about it; that debt I insist upon taking on my own shoulders. Give me the notes of hand.

JASP. (*takes notes out of a pocket book—as he is giving them, draws back*) You won't trouble Meg's father about them? Honour bright?

ROLAND. As a brass knocker. (*takes notes and tears them up*) Nobody shall say, "I owe" to Roly!

JASP. He's not all bad—is he, Meg?

ROLAND. Oh, Jasper and I are made of the right stuff—eh?

MEG. (*L.*) You have both been good to my father—very good! And to me—but there—I cannot wrong Jasper by saying you have his heart.

ROLAND. (*aside*) Hanged if I don't think there's hope for Jasper yet. (*aloud*) Well, I must go and find our agricultural parent; (*crossing to L.*) and I hope in a serene state, for I shall make a clean breast, and then its tenant won't be ashamed to display its palpitations.

Exit in house, L.

JASP. (*up, c.*) Now, I'll put on my jacket, and stick to the bench till I've earned a passage to Australia.

MEG. (*L. c., picking a flower*) And what will you do there?

JASP. I don't know;—perhaps get a government appointment as bushranger. Oh, mind you, I know something about farming, and——

MEG. And who is to befriend me when you are gone, Jasper? (*looking off, R. U. E.*) Poor Sir Ashley is coming; I must get out of his way! I haven't the heart to be the first to tell him of his misfortune.

JASP. Oh, bless you, he's a philosopher; he isn't such a fool as I am, Meg. (*looks off, R.*) There; the silly fellow has dropped his kid glove into the hog-wash! If you want to slip off, now's your time!—let's go and cheer one another by indulging in our melancholy thoughts. (*as they go through gate to L.*) Do you ever wonder what has

you'd done to your mother, that she should have punished you by bringing you into the world? I do.

Exit JASPER, L. U. E., followed by MEG, talking.

*Enter CROW, followed by ROLAND, from farm, L.—
ROLAND goes down, L.*

CROW. (*speaks as he enters*) What, sir? What? How dare you name such a thing? Love my daughter Cornelia! Why, confound it, if I didn't owe my life to you, I'd take yours on the spot!—Cornelia—Lady Merton—good gracious! I had begun to think you was dangling after Meg, and even that was—but Corn-e-lia indeed! Oh, here comes Sir Ashley himself. Confound you, I'll expose you!—I'll have no pity on you—I'll hand you over to him!

Enter MERTON, through gate c., and down, R.

Here, Sir Ash; resent your own insult: Here's this here individual—I don't know what else to call him—has dared—with full knowledge of your priory right and title, to ask my sanction to his making love to Cornelia!

MERT. (R.) Well, I really don't know anything against the gentlemen.

CROW (C.) Against the what? the "gentleman"! Did you hear what I said? He pits himself against *you* with my daughter.

MERT. I must decline to be pitted; it must not be said in history, that Sir Ashley Merton, fourth baronet of that name, was an obstacle to the course of true love; so if Cornelia loves him——

CROW. If she—loves him! Is this a conspiracy to drive me mad? Sir Ashley, is that girl—who has been studying unnatural philosophy, and the deuce knows what all, to prove her affection for you, to be villified by such an insinuation as that? Oh, here she is!

Enter CORNELIA, from farm, L., and down, L. C.

Nelly! Nelly! here's pretty scandal going on about you, but to cut the matter short—you see these here two—a gentleman, and a—individual, don't you? Well, which of them do you love?

CORN. (*turning L. to ROLAND*) This gentleman, dear father.

MERT. (R.) Pardon me—that's the "individual."

CROW. Fire and fury! this is a conspiracy; but I'll soon bring this fine boarding-school miss to her senses. As for you, (*to ROLAND*) you penniless scamp, I'll prosecute you for—for—I don't know what; but it's felony. Sir Ashley, I shall forthwith take proceedings against you for—for—well, never mind what it's called—I can afford to go to law.

Enter EYTEM and MRS. NETWELL from R., through gate--

JASPER and MEG from L., and remain at gate talking--

MRS. NETWELL remains up, R., and is joined by MERTON.

EYTEM. (*coming down, R.*) Who talks of going to law? Law has come to you.

CROW. (C.) Here's a breach, Mr. Eytem. I lay my damages at twenty thousand at the least—Sir Ashley eries off—he deserts my daughter!

EYTEM. So my fair client tells me; and it appears that Mr. Roland Pidgeon is now the lucky man.

CROW. He shall have the luck of my horsewhip about his shoulders if—

EYTEM. Sir, this young gentleman is now proved to be the real claimant of his uncle's estate, value twenty thousand at the least.

CROW. (*cooling down*) Oh, is he? And you say, Sir A., that you decline off my daughter?

MERTON. (*up, R.*) I have no alternative.

CROW. "Turnative" indeed! then I'll punish you, sir, by—by accepting this young bull-fighter; hang'd if I don't! but I've been deceived once—I'll keep a pretty sharp look out on my other wench. (*to MEG*) What are you doing, talking to that mechanical pauper?

EYTEM. (*aside*) I must put in a word for him too. (*aloud*) Mr. Crow, I have consulted my partner, and he refuses to rent the farm to you.

CROW. He does?

EYTEM. Jasper, my lad, (*JASPER down, R.*) you entrusted a thousand pounds to me for investment; I bought and sold your shares at an extraordinary crisis, and doubled

your capital in a week. One half of this farm now belongs to us; throw your cash into it, and shew this farmer of the old school what intelligence and manure will do with waste land.

JASP. (R.) Set up an opposition shop to Meg's father? No, I'm blessed if I do, Mr. Eytem! but, if you will let the land to Mr. Crow, and he likes to take me as a sort of partner, now——

CROW. (L.) Worse and worse! why, he'd be ploughing the land with a jack-plane.

MEG. (*aside to CROW, L.*) Father, father! Jasper was a good friend to you when you needed it.

EYTEM. (*to CROW*) Come here, and listen to counsel *pro* and *con*.

(*all retire up—MERTON and MRS. N. come forward*)

MERT. (R. c.) Now, Sophia, the spell is withdrawn from my tongue, and I may fearlessly declare I love you; yes, it has been coming on (so to speak) for the last three months.

MRS. N. (L. c.) Then, Sir Ashley, you must take me as I am, a mere woman. If 'tis a question of love, I relinquish philosophy and mathematics.

MERT. What, won't you study Euclid?

MRS. N. I'll study you, and you only! you were my *pons asinorum*, and I have mastered you—Q. E. D. I have discovered that you have great intellect——

MERT. Dear Sophia!

MRS. N. But you require the guidance of a practical mind.

MERT. I think I do.

MRS. N. Be ruled by me in *all* things; and like poor dear Netwell, your home will be your heaven.

MERT. Yes, Netwell "went home" very soon after he was married. Well, do as you please with me, but be mine.

EYTEM. (*coming down*) Pardon me, Sir Ashley. (MERTON *goes up, R.*) Mrs. Netwell, can I have the happiness of speaking a few words—privately.

MRS. N. (R., *aside to him*) Too late, Mr. Eytem—*engaged!*

EYTEM. (*aside*) Deuce take it, the baronet has been

before me—(to MRS. NETWELL) I see madam—I now see why you held me on and off—a *corps de reserve*—in fact you considered me a decoy duck.

MRS. N. Mr. Eytem! I never considered you a duck—come; don't be vexed: I'm not worthy of it.

EYTEM. Vexed! no! but I've been taught a lesson—Pepper, Gulp and Eytem, are not to be trifled with generally; but old Harry himself may be taken in by a widow.

MRS. N. Oh, Mr. Eytem, for shame! I really didn't even know your name was Harry—(they separate, and go up—JASPER and MEG come forward)

JASP. (L. C.) Then it's settled. Pidgeon and Crow; I'm to be the governor's partner; but I'll work early and late—and mark my words, the farm shall all be his again by-and-bye, for your sake.

MEG. (R. C.) For my sake, Jasper! Is it possible you can have a kind thought of me still?

JASP. Meg, I think better of myself since I've discovered my thoughts of you are not all selfish, and I'll keep so—at least, I'll try.

MEG. That word, Jasper—don't you remember reproving me for saying, I'd try?

JASP. Poor girl, and so I did; well, don't try any more, there's no need.

MEG. There is not indeed; the very error which led me astray proved the generous heart I had deserted, and made me humbled, know that—I cannot say it—

JASP. Whisper it, Meg, and then I'll pretend not to hear it. (MEG whispers)

CROW. (coming down, L. C.) Hoá, there! what's that whispering about? (all come forward)

ROLAND. (aside to CORNELIA, L.) I can guess. Another Pidgeon will pair off with another Crow.

CROW. There's no occasion to conceal nothing from me, I'm sure. A baronet throws over my daughter and I forgive him; a young bull-fighter seizes her, willy nilly—I tumble to it; my daughter herself makes an ass of me, and I'm patient; a lawyer chisels me and I take it as a thing of course. A bread-and-cheese carpenter is thrust on me as partner and I receive him with open arms. So

hang me if I haven't come to the belief that I'm an angel in top boots, and that's the truth.

EYTEM. (*leaning on back of seat, R. C.*) Well done, farmer; I see you know how to make a virtue of necessity.

CROW. But what's the secret, Meg?

MEG. I whisper'd, "Don't condemn my errors past,
The heart may stray, yet, turning right at last,
Learn to reward an honest pure affection."

ROLAND. (*aside*) So! my suspicion took the right direction.

JASP. (*to Audience*) She said—but no!—it isn't fair to tell—
Yet, Meg's Diversion may, we hope, end well;
For Pidgeon's proud to own he's caught and caged.
Don't ask me to say more—look here!

(*pulls the placard (used in Act I.) from his pocket
and pins it on his breast, displaying the word—
"ENGAGED!"*)

EYTEM.

(*leaning on back of seat*)

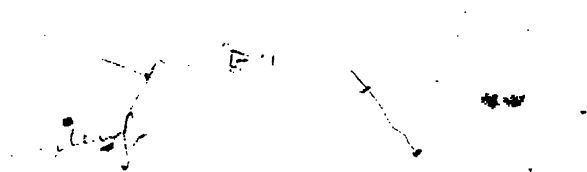
MERT. & MRS. N. MEG. JASP. CROW. CORNELLAY ROLAND.
(*on seat*)

R.

E.

Curtain.





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